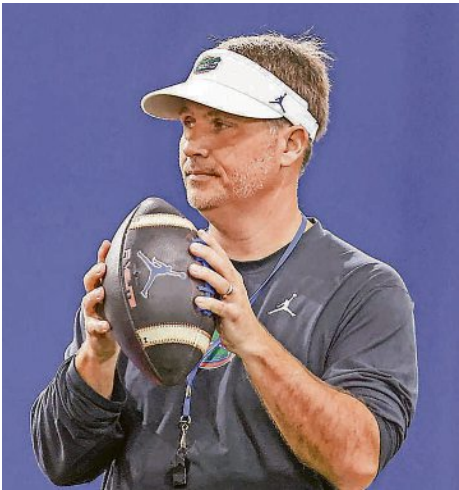




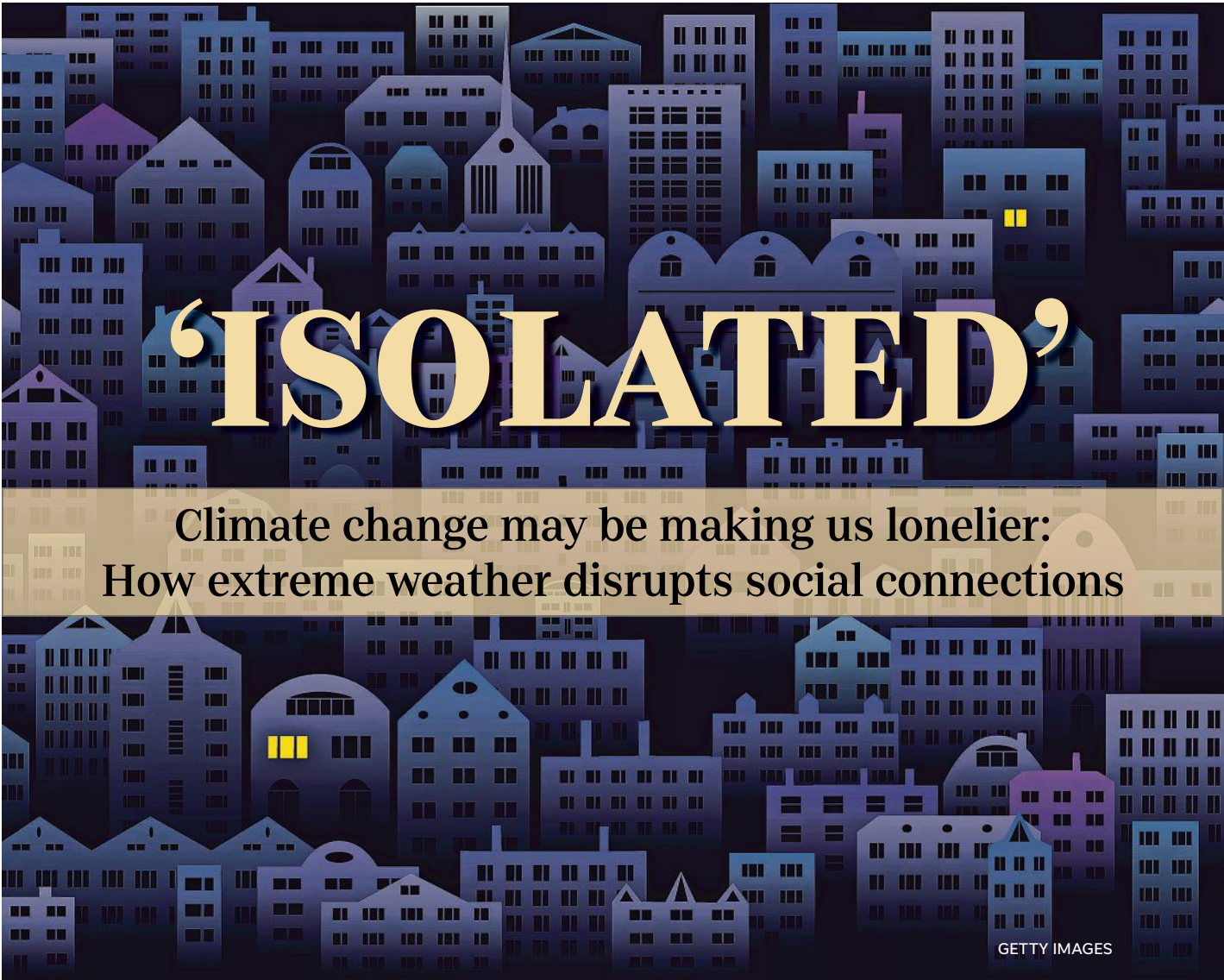
College football’s most polarizing teams for 2026

SPORTS, 11A

The Marion Star

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Softball Game highlights overdose prevention

Jane Imbody
Marion Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

A community softball game in Marion combined recovery support and overdose awareness on Aug. 22, bringing together residents in recovery, court officials and public health advocates for an afternoon focused on connection and education.

The special edition of the monthly Recovery Softball Game was organized by Lindsey Cochran, a probation officer with Marion Municipal Court, in partnership with Marion Public Health, according to a community announcement.

Held from 12-3 p.m. at Lincoln Stadium in Lincoln Park, the event invited community members to participate on the field or attend as spectators while promoting recovery resources and overdose prevention efforts.

Recovery Softball traces its roots to an outreach effort started about a decade ago by local counseling advocates. The program uses recreational sports to create opportunities for interaction among people in recovery, individuals involved in the justice system and court personnel.

“Our goal is to eliminate the stigma that the court just wants to put people in jail and that we only see the worst in people,” Cochran previously shared regarding the outreach mission. “We want to show that we’re supporting their recovery and that we want to see them do well.”

Organizers said the games provide a positive social setting for people working to maintain sobriety while strengthening community connections.

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Fiona Doherty
University of Tennessee | THE CONVERSATION

Severe storms, heat waves and wildfires can shut down the social life of a community, flooding out festivals, canceling community events and keeping people indoors.

They’re also evidence of how climate change isn’t just changing the environments we all live in, but also impeding our ability to connect with one another.

Around the world, social connection is increasingly recognized as essential to individual and collective well-being. It keeps our brains active and can lower stress levels. During emergencies, social ties can also save lives.

Relationships are conduits for timely information sharing, mutual aid and collective action. When temperatures soar, friends and neighbors share heat warnings, check on older adults or other community

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One way climate change can weaken social connection is by altering places and traditions that hold cultural and community significance.
JON CHERRY/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Child care could influence governor’s race, poll finds

Alex Perry
USA TODAY NETWORK

Affordability remains a top concern for Ohio voters heading into the 2026 governor’s race, and a new poll suggests that many see child care affordability as a major part of the problem.

The survey, conducted by UpONE Insights for Groundwork Ohio and the First Five Years Fund, found agreement across party lines that child care affordability is a problem, with voters linking it to both family finances and Ohio’s workforce. Many also said state leaders should do more to address it.

The findings come as candidates Amy Acton and Vivek Ramaswamy continue positioning themselves for the 2026 governor’s race. Here’s a break-

down of the findings.

Most Ohio voters say child care affordability is a problem

Finding and affording child care remains a challenge for many Ohio families, according to respondents.

Eight in 10 poll respondents said child care costs are contributing to the nation’s broader affordability crisis, while 64% identified lowering the cost of living as one of the two most important issues facing their families. Nearly three-quarters said a candidate’s plan to support working families with young children would influence their vote.

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Worried single mother holding baby boy in her lap while paying bills at home.
GETTY IMAGES

