

Youth Violence and Crime: The Decline of Personal Safety in America

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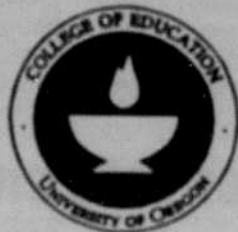
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Record ozone loss metered above Europe

■ **POLLUTION:** Unusually cold weather and chemicals caused excessive depletion

GENEVA (AP) — Ozone levels plummeted to record lows over Britain and Scandinavia this winter, exposing inhabitants to some of the worst levels of ultraviolet radiation recorded in densely populated areas, the World Meteorological Organization said Tuesday.

Ozone depletion over that region, caused in large part by man-made chemicals released into the atmosphere, also is related to the seasons and has been made worse by unusually cold temperatures.

The period of extremely low ozone levels was expected to end later this month.

Regional ozone levels during January, February and the early part of March averaged about 30 percent below the average levels recorded between 1957 and 1978, before man-made chemicals started destroying the ozone, according to measurements published by the U.N. agency.

On days in late February and the beginning of March, the levels were as low as 45 percent below the pre-1978 levels — a depletion unprecedented in the Northern Hemisphere.

"This means the people have twice as much radiation as normal," said Dr. Rumen Bojkov, special adviser on ozone to the organization. "It is fortunate that at this time of the year, no one is bathing in the North Sea."

Ozone plays a vital role by shielding humans and other forms of life from damage connected with dangerous forms of solar radiation.

Gorbachev gets names needed for candidacy

MOSCOW (AP) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's backers have gathered the 1 million signatures needed to put his name on the ballot in June's presidential elections.

Alexei Manannikov, leader of the group backing Gorbachev's presidential bid, said in a news conference Tuesday that his candidate stood a good chance of winning despite dismal ratings.

Manannikov said Gorbachev would get the vote of the "silent majority," the so-called third force between the extremes of President Boris Yeltsin and Communist Party candidate Gennady Zyuganov.

Gorbachev has said he intends to run for the presidency, but he has not made an official announcement.

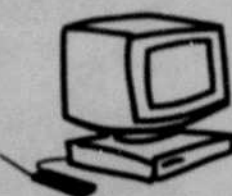
If Gorbachev runs, Manannikov said, "he could break through the bipolar candidate scheme of Yeltsin and Zyuganov created by the present power structure."

Gorbachev is widely blamed in Russia for the collapse of the Soviet Union that left millions struggling to survive.

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