

LATE SPORTS

No. 1 Duke holds off Kentucky

No. 8 Wildcats push unbeaten Blue Devils but fall in OT 95-92. College hoops, 1C

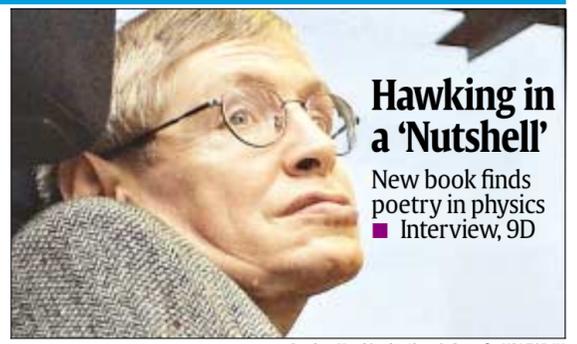


Duke's Mike Dunleavy

By Ray Stubblebine, Reuters

Rangers acquire Rocker

Controversial relief pitcher wants 'a fair shake,' 1C
Cardinals sign Tino Martinez, 4C



Hawking in a 'Nutshell'

New book finds poetry in physics
Interview, 9D

Stephen Hawking by Alastair Grant for USA TODAY

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Newsline

News Money Sports Life

Dow nears 10,000; Nasdaq tops 2000

Dow Jones industrial average soars 106.42 points to 9998.39; Nasdaq index climbs 17.31 to 2004.76; 30-year Treasury bond yield falls to 5.51%, 1, 4B.
USA TODAY Internet 100 rises 0.33 to 51.42, 1B.
Japan's Nikkei average is down 34 points, 0.3%, to 10,398 early today; yen is 128.15 per dollar. Hong Kong's Hang Seng is up 88 points, 0.8%, to 11,575.

Teamwork hailed in education bill passage

Bipartisan effort in Senate helps advance legislation to establish groundbreaking nationwide academic achievement standards. President Bush plans ceremony next month to sign the bill into law, 14A.

National Guard report raises eyebrows

Two members of House Armed Services Committee say they will follow up on a USA TODAY report that some top National Guard commanders have engaged in patterns of misconduct, 2A.



Pool photo by Dave Martin

Old Glory flies over Kandahar

American flag signed by relatives of World Trade Center attack victims is flown at Afghanistan airport for a day Tuesday before being returned to New York.
Justice Department is set to weigh in on controversy surrounding victims' compensation, 10D.
Stories about the war on terrorism are often shaped in Executive Office Building, 14A.

Fire damages New York cathedral

Firefighters battle a blaze at the landmark Gothic cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. It is considered to be one of the largest churches in the world. No one was injured, 6A.

Government extends anthrax treatments

Thousands of people exposed to anthrax-laced letters can get anthrax vaccine and 40 more days of antibiotics, Health and Human Services chief says, 6A.

Today's debate: Air safety

In USA TODAY's opinion, "Flaws in 37-year-old maintenance system remain unaddressed," 16A.
"The FAA is continuously making improvements to the way we monitor airline-safety programs," says the FAA's Nicholas Sabatini, 16A.

Money: Holiday shopping lukewarm

With Christmas rapidly approaching, two new indexes show shoppers continue to do more browsing than buying, 1B.

Sports: NFL studies crowd control

Two beer bottle-throwing incidents prompt league to consider lobbying for use of cups instead, 1, 3C.

Life: Small stereos with big sound

Three little sound systems are relatively easy to set up and can satisfy some hard-to-please ears. Personal Tech plugs them in and rates them, 3D.

By John O. Buckley

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USA TODAY Snapshots

Mail on the move: 62 billion items (an average of 400 pieces of mail to every address in the USA). 20 billion items moved between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Mail moved since Sept. 11.

Crossword 11D, Editorial/Opinion 16-17A, Lotteries 11C, Marketplace Today 11D, State-by-state 12A, Stocks 4, 6, 9, 13-18B.

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By Phil Penman, splashnews

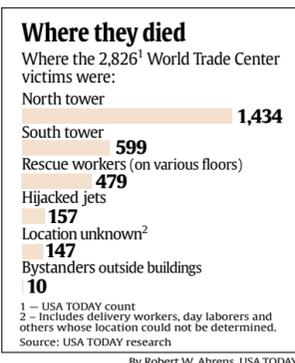
Survivors: Covered in dust, George Sleigh, right, and others head away from the World Trade Center after the attacks Sept. 11. Sleigh worked on the 91st floor of the north tower, and he and his co-workers escaped. No one on a higher floor survived.

For many on Sept. 11, survival was no accident

A USA TODAY examination of the disaster in New York finds that practice drills, the design of the towers and luck saved lives

By Dennis Cauchon USA TODAY

NEW YORK — George Sleigh, a British-born naval architect, was on the phone in his 91st floor office when he heard the roar of jet engines. Looking out his window, he had time to think just three things: The wheels are up, the underbelly is white, and "man, that guy is low."
An American Airlines Boeing 767 was hurtling toward him at 500 mph, loaded with 92 people and 15,000 gallons of jet fuel. The jet exploded into the 93rd through 98th floors of the World Trade Center's north tower with a force equal to 480,000 pounds of TNT. It was 8:46 a.m. on Sept. 11.
The walls, the ceiling and bookshelves crumbled. Sleigh, 63, manager of technical consistency at the American Bureau of Shipping, crawled from the rubble. He looked up at exposed steel beams and the concrete underside of the 92nd floor. He didn't know it at the time, but that concrete floor was the bottom of a tomb for more than 1,300 people. Nobody survived on the floors above him. But on his floor and below, an amazing story unfolded: Nearly everyone lived.
The line between life and death that morning was as straight as a steel beam. Everyone on the 92nd

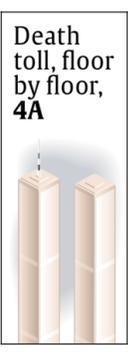


By Robert W. Ahrens, USA TODAY

Cover story

firefighters and police officers.
From a distance of three months, it is clear that the early picture of what happened inside the World Trade Center on Sept. 11 was incomplete and often inaccurate. Many basic details that permeate news reports and the public consciousness are wrong, including the number of deaths, the number of people in the buildings, even the exact times and locations of the two jet crashes.

floor died. Everyone on the 91st floor lived.
When a second jet hit the south tower 16½ minutes later, the pattern was virtually the same. In each tower, 99% of the occupants below the crash survived. At the impact area and above, survival was limited to just a handful of people in the south tower who made an amazing escape.
Four hundred seventy-nine rescue workers died making the evacuation a success. The sacrifice of New York firefighters and police is well-known. But 113 others, from low-paid security guards to white-collar workers at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the buildings' owner, stood their ground with

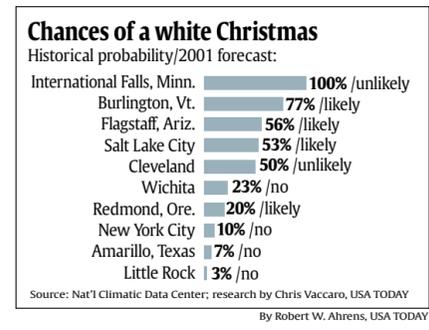


Please see COVER STORY on 3A

White out for this Christmas

Most of nation won't get snow

By Haya El Nasser and Chris Vaccaro USA TODAY
Irving Berlin dreamed about it, and Bing Crosby immortalized the romantic notion of it. Every Christmas, many people wish for it.
But the chance of having a white Christmas — defined as having at least 1 inch of snow on the ground — is little to nil for much of the USA this year.
The National Weather Service said Tuesday that the northern Rockies, mountains of the Pacific Northwest, parts of New England and northern New York will have a white Christmas. Some historically snowy places — International Falls, Minn., for instance — won't.
The forecast for this Christmas: A storm is expected to develop Saturday over the southern Plains and move on Christmas Eve into the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, where it could bring snow — even to major cities such as New York and Boston. That could result in a white Christmas for some, a rainy and icy Christmas for others.
The Northwest can expect rain show-



ers along the coast. Central states and the South and West can expect a dry holiday.
A white Christmas evokes images of warm family reunions and fond memories of happy childhood holidays. And people may be longing for one — especially this year, says Marian Salzman, who tracks trends for Euro RSCG Worldwide, a marketing and advertising firm.
"It hearkens back to a simpler time when there wasn't an Osama bin Laden — when you could bring tweezers on an airplane," Salzman says.
But white Christmases are uncommon for much of the USA.
Almost 30% of the population lives where the historical probability for a

white Christmas is zero: most of the West Coast, southern Arizona and New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma.
In the southern third of the country, the probability is less than 20%, according to the National Climatic Data Center, which bases its probabilities on average Christmas snow depths from 1961 to 1990.
In Santa Claus, Ind., residents aren't likely to get snow this Christmas. The probability is 13%, the forecast is not any better, and residents know it. "It'll be a cold day in heck" before the town of 2,041 has a white Christmas, says Jerry Schue, a local real estate agent.
There's no fretting in North Pole, Alaska, where temperatures hovered around 30 degrees below zero this week. The historic chance of a white Christmas is 100%. Eight inches of snow already blanket the town.
"I could not imagine a green Christmas," says Dawn Vincent, who works at a supermarket on Santa Claus Lane. "It seems to go almost against nature."
► Your chances of a white Christmas. U.S. map, with probabilities, 18A

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