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# News Digest

## Early warnings help Chicago brace storm

**1** CHICAGO — Meteorologist Tom Skilling cut short a vacation in Alaska so he could return home a day before a snowstorm hobbled travel through Chicago. He knew the storm was coming because he had predicted it a week earlier.

Thanks to advancements in radar, computers and satellites, Skilling and other forecasters had a far clearer picture of what was coming than they had during the city's previous major blizzards.

They didn't know exactly how serious it would be, but their warnings — combined with the storm's arrival on a holiday weekend instead of during the busy work week — helped soften its blow.

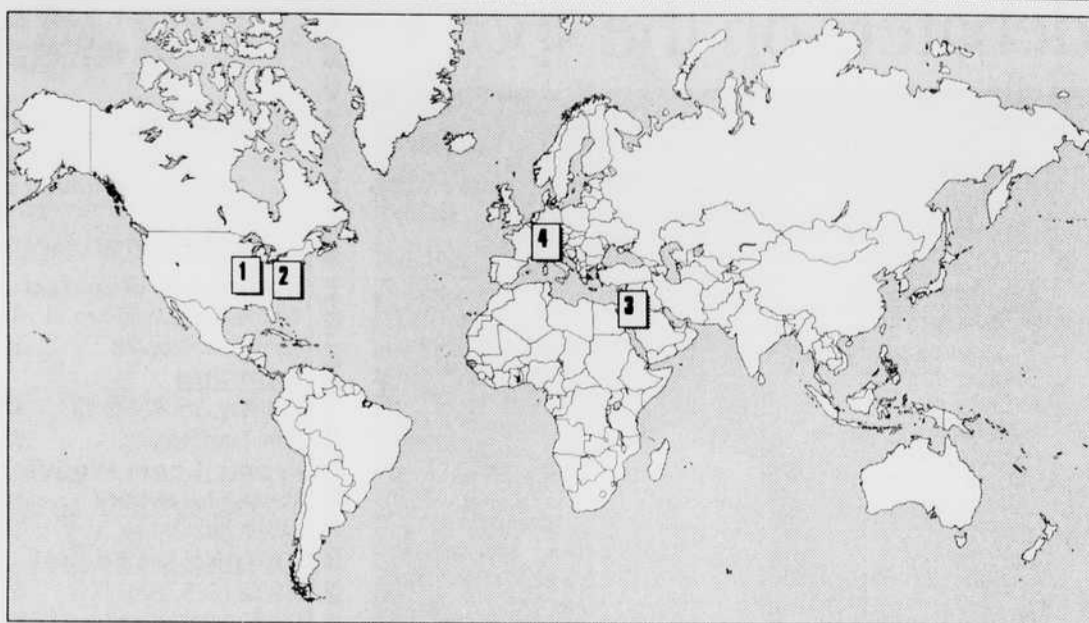
From Friday through Sunday, 21.6 inches of snow fell at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, including a one-day record of 18.6 inches for Saturday. The city's greatest sustained storm dumped more than 34 inches over 10 days in January 1979.

## Elizabeth Dole for president?

**2** WASHINGTON — Elizabeth Dole, a Cabinet member in two GOP administrations whose husband lost to President Clinton in 1996, said Monday she will leave her job with the American Red Cross to pursue a potential White House bid of her own.

Mrs. Dole, 62, made her plans known as Sen. John Ashcroft privately told surprised supporters that he will announce Tuesday that he has decided not to run for president. The Missouri lawmaker had spent the last year laying the groundwork for a presidential bid, and was considered one of the strongest prospects among social conservatives.

Addressing 500 cheering, sometimes teary-eyed employees, Mrs. Dole announced plans to leave in two weeks, after near-



ly eight years as head of the non-profit relief group. "There may be another way for me to serve our country," she said at the organization's historic headquarters two blocks from the White House.

In an interview later, Mrs. Dole said she plans to decide by March whether to run. "I'm going to give it serious consideration," she said. Yet friends and allies say Mrs. Dole is determined to run for president if her financial and political support is as strong as she suspects.

"I'm sure she's preparing to commit herself," said pollster Tony Fabrizio, who worked for former Sen. Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign.

## Doomsday cult members deported

**3** PETAH TIKVAH, Israel — Israel ordered 11 members of a doomsday cult deported to the United States and police said Monday that they suspected three others of plotting to commit violence in Jerusalem.

Police arrested 14 members of the Concerned Christians on Sunday and said the Denver-based group hoped that blood-

shed at holy sites would trigger the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Armageddon that the Bible says will follow.

Three detained cult members who were ordered to appear before a magistrate on Monday denied the allegations.

"I am not here to hurt anybody," one of the men, identified in court papers as John Bayles, told Judge Nira Diskin.

Israeli authorities fear the Concerned Christians may only be a forerunner and that scores of other religious extremists will be drawn to Jerusalem to await the turn of the millennium and live out their apocalyptic fantasies.

Some 4.5 million tourists, including many Christian pilgrims, are expected to visit the Holy Land this year, double the usual number.

## Euro trading above expectations

**4** FRANKFURT, Germany — Europe's currency got off to a strong start Monday, rising against the dollar on world currency markets. But analysts said it will take time to determine whether the currency will chal-

lenge the dollar's international dominance.

Some suggested if the euro is too strong, it could hurt both the U.S. and European economies.

With the euro trading above expectations, European officials were delighted at the successful launch of their ambitious economic and monetary union, tightly linking 11 nations and their 292 million residents.

After starting off at \$1.1668 early in the trading day, the euro hit a high of \$1.1886 in Tokyo, and slipped slightly to \$1.1820 in late European trading. In New York, the euro cost \$1.1830 in late trading.

French central banker Jean-Claude Trichet welcomed the euro's strength as "the best possible omen."

The euro was launched Jan. 1, a day after conversion rates against the 11 participating currencies were fixed. While euro coins and bank notes will not be in consumers' pockets until 2002, the currency can be bought and sold electronically around the world. It also can be used for purchases by credit card or traveler's check.

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