EVOLUTIONS
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DEPARTED: Dr. Cheddi Bharat Jagan, 79, Guyana's "man of the people," of a heart condition, on March 6, 1997. After a lifetime leading the struggle for independence from British rule, Dr. Jagan was elected the first democratic president in 1992. He devoted his entire life in service to his people, who admired his energetic ways, wit, humor and brilliance.

CONFESSED: Abigail Boettcher, the reigning pork spokesperson of Buena Vista County, Iowa, that she is a vegetarian. A cheerleader, athlete and daughter of a pig farmer, the veggie-loving college freshman stunned 200 assembled hog producers when she told her secret in a farewell speech at the annual banquet.

ELECTED: Sister Nirmala, 63, a former Nepalese Hindu brahmin who converted to Roman Catholicism, by 132 senior nuns to replace the ailing Mother Teresa as the leader of her religious order, church authorities said. Sister Nirmala was trained as a lawyer before joining the Missionaries of Charity. Since 1979 she has led the contemplative wing in which nuns devote their lives to meditation.

RECOVERING: From a stroke, Richard Alpert, a k a Ram Dass, is partially paralysed, with some speech loss but mentally well. A

Harvard University colleague of LSD guru Timothy Leary in the '60s, he met his spiritual master, Neem Karoli Baba, in India in 1967. His book Be Here Now sold over one million copies and introduced many Westerners to Eastern spirituality. His Hanuman Foundation developed the "Prison-Ashram Project" to help inmates with their spiritual growth, and the "Living-Dying Project" to provide support for conscious dying.