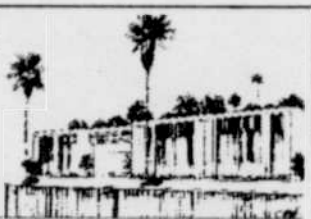




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WORLD news

IRAQ

Salam Pax, the gay Iraqi blogger who captivated Web surfers with his reports from inside Iraq before and during the war, was not an Internet hoax, as some people had speculated.

Earlier this month journalists identified him as a 29-year-old, multilingual, middle-class architect who worked as a translator for freelancer Peter Maass during the war. Pax's blog continues at dearraed.blogspot.com.

"He's a lot like us, but he's not us," Maass told *The Los Angeles Times* June 4 after learning of his translator's other identity. "Salam sees what's happening around him—the tragedy or the absurdity—and he communicates it in a human voice that most journalists don't have."

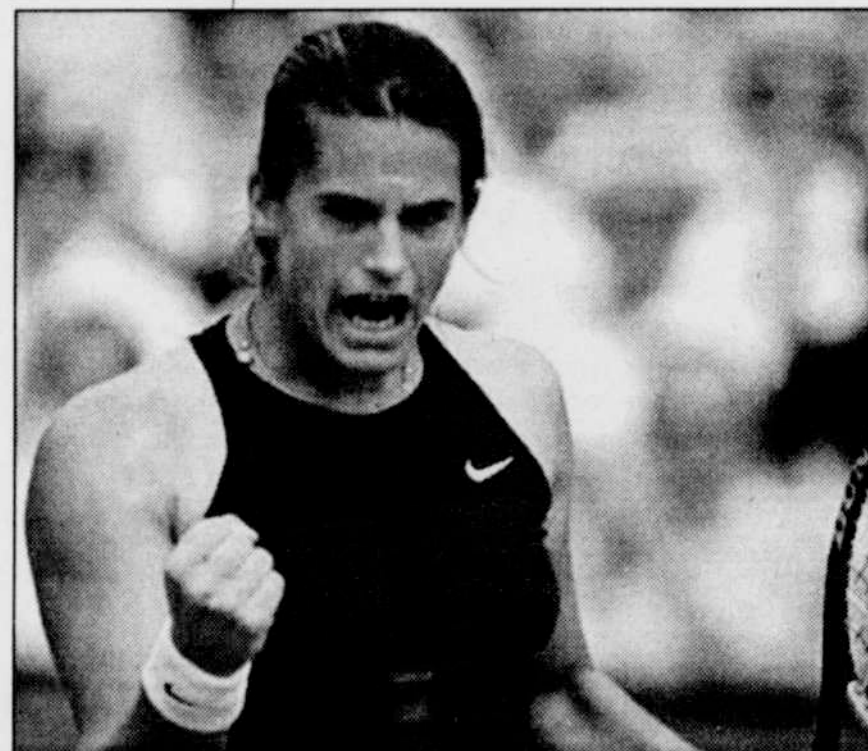
In a June 3 posting Pax wrote: "I was wondering when will [Maass] find out [that I am Salam Pax] and if he will be angry because I didn't tell him. I think he isn't. [In his article about Pax at Salon.com] he uses words like 'chubby' and 'cherubic' to describe me. Ewww."

FRANCE

Lesbian tennis champion Amélie Mauresmo, 23, has become the first tennis player on display at the Grevin wax museum in Paris.

She was on hand as her likeness was unveiled in late May. She also recently posed topless for the cover of *Paris Match* and announced, "I've found the woman of my life."

In the accompanying article, Mauresmo said she was "wounded" in 1999 when fellow player Martina Hingis called her "half a man" and competitor Lindsay Davenport made fun of her "guy" shoulders. For a while, she added, she refrained from showing her shoulders in public.



Lesbian tennis champ Amélie Mauresmo has shouldered nasty comments from her competitors

UNITED KINGDOM

British male soldiers might have sexually tortured male Iraqi prisoners of war, London's *Telegraph* reported June 1. One man was arrested after dropping off incriminating film for processing back in Britain, and the other seven members of his unit are under investigation by the Special Investigation Branch of the Royal Military Police.

According to the *Telegraph*, "[One] picture showed a pair of white legs and the head of an Iraqi. The hand of a man behind the Iraqi's head appeared to be forcing him to perform a sex act. [Another] picture showed a pair of bare bottoms with an Iraqi on his knees on the floor and his body bent. Another man was pressed behind him in what seemed to be a sexual position. [Another] picture appears to show two naked Iraqis cowering on the ground."



John Stewart



Neil Fletcher

Two male members of Aberdeen, Scotland's City Council announced May 30 that they will marry each other, *The Scotsman* reported.

Liberal Democrats John Stewart, 30, and Neil Fletcher, 38, who represent neighboring districts, have been together 10 years. They were elected to their seats in May.

"We are very much in love and would like to have some type of marriage," Fletcher said. "It would be great to have some kind of legal acknowledgment of our relationship."

Stewart added: "We have never hidden the fact that we are a couple. We take our careers on the council seriously, and it seemed like an appropriate time to make our relationship perfectly clear. We name each other as respective partners on the Lib Dems' Web site, so it is not rocket science to find out."

Fletcher said the couple don't "really go round the gay scene and only visited a gay club together for the first time last week."

London's subway system—the Underground, or Tube—has banned further

advertisements by a Caribbean resort that bars gay couples, *The Guardian* reported June 5. Ads for the Sandals chain state that the accommodations are for "mixed-sex couples only."

London Underground took action after Mayor Ken Livingstone denounced the ads as discriminatory. "I am pleased to say London Underground agreed that it is not acceptable for a company with such an openly discriminatory policy to advertise on public transport in this city," he said.

A Tube spokeswoman said the ads were "not appropriate" because they contravened the system's "social inclusion policies." A total of 12 Sandals properties in Antigua, Barbados, Cuba, Jamaica and St. Lucia allow only heterosexual couples. The company operates seven other resorts in Cuba, Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands that are open to "singles, families, groups—everyone."

CANADA

Governments will rescue Toronto Pride, 365Gay.com reported June 2.

The parade has lost sponsors and faces increased liability insurance premiums. Worst of all, however, severe acute respiratory syndrome has caused thousands of canceled hotel reservations for Pride weekend, suggesting attendance could plummet.

Toronto has more SARS cases than any city outside Asia and has seen a resurgence of infections and quarantines in recent weeks. Federal, provincial and city governments will infuse about \$182,500 to keep the parade afloat, the Web site said.

Toronto Pride is believed to attract more than 1 million people to the city's gay village.



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