

INQUIRING MINDS

What is the biggest challenge on your plate?

THOMAS ISAAC,
partner, McCarthy Tétrault's
Business Law Group

"A thorough understanding of how government is implementing the duty to consult aboriginal people. Right now, if you talk about an environmental assessment for pipelines, hydroelectric facilities or logging roads, people know what that is. If you ask, 'How is the Crown dealing



with the duty to consult in respect of these First Nations approval processes?' you don't get the same degree of certainty."

PAT CARNEY, B.C.

senator "I'm working hard to ensure China has a high priority with the new Conservative government. We have a new government and cabinet that are not familiar with China and



Canada-China issues, and China is our second-largest trading partner after the States. I'm working to ensure it's on the government's priority list."

MICHAEL BUBLÉ,
vocalist and recording
artist

"My third CD. When I was signed to Warner Bros. Records four years ago, my debut was expected to sell 50,000 to 100,000. It sold



nearly five million with hard work and a lot of luck. My first two records collectively sold over 10 million, which naturally puts the pressure on me to do the same or better for this next release. With the record business rapidly declining, the executives in my company have told me I should be thrilled to do the same amount again. But to be completely honest, I'd be greatly disappointed." □

SWEET GIG

Celebrity pay dirt

Video killed the radio star, so the song by one-hit-wonder The Buggles goes. And bloggers, it seems, may just kill the entertainment magazine. Take Elaine Lui, a Vancouver-based celebrity gossip whose decidedly irreverent blog, *laineygossip.com*, has garnered her thousands of fans across North America and landed her a regular TV spot on CTV's *eTalk*.

It's not just Lui's unique brand of wit and snarkiness (her nickname for a certain high-profile Scientologist and father? GMD – for Gay Midget Dwarf) that drove 746,000 unique visitors to her site in September. It's also her connection to well-placed sources in the upper echelons of the Hollywood machine.

"I wrote that [Katie Holmes] had missed her period 12 hours before the official announcement came out in *People* magazine," Lui boasts over a cup of coffee near her home in trendy Kitsilano. "The big one was that I broke the story that Angelina and Brad would have their baby in Africa three months before everybody else... That was the hugest coup."

It all began humbly, as a regular email roundup of entertainment news headlines to friends. That morphed into a blog in January 2005, and in July of that year, Lui was invited by CTV for a meeting that led to a two-year contract as a gossip reporter on *eTalk*. In April 2006, Lui incorporated and launched Lainey Gossip Entertainment Inc. with her husband, a manager at Rogers Wireless whose identity she won't reveal.

In June, Lui gave up her day job as a development officer with Covenant House to fully devote herself to following the antics of celebrities. In January 2006, she signed

with ad agency UpTrend Media, and ads for Tampax, Apple and Unilever's Sunsilk hair-care products now regularly appear on her site. Lui won't reveal any revenue figures, but says it's beginning to pay off.

Asked to explain the appeal of celebrity dirt, Lui gets a tad philosophical. "There are people who scoff at [gossip] and say it has no relevance to society. But at the same time it is so prevalent, to the point where when Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's baby photos come out, it makes the national news."

Does she worry about upsetting the stars? Apart from the threat of being sued (which hasn't happened yet), Lui couldn't care less. "I don't need my favourite movie star to be my best friend," she says. "I have friends." □

