



Berita Harian's articles about Fig & Olive & Gedung Kuning

Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 6:29 PM

To: Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com>, Masmunah Abdullah <mas@figolive.com>

Cc: "ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH (SPF)" <zuraidah_abdullah@spf.gov.sg>, "yaacob_ibrahim@mica.gov.sg" <yaacob_ibrahim@mica.gov.sg>, Khir Johari <khir19@gmail.com>

Salaam Zul & Mas,

Thank you for your email. Here are my rejoinders.

Acknowledgements

I'm not referring to those who came up on stage. They deserved to be acknowledged, especially those who helped you free of charge (though I'm sure Puan Som Said dancers were paid for their performance). Pls read my email properly – I said that there was no mention of us who gave advice and suggestions. That is all. I didn't imply that you don't have *adab*. I said it would be courteous if you would acknowledge the Gedung Kuning family. Whether or not we were at the press conference, it didn't matter. What I wrote was factual about how people who read the article would think it was your advisor who gave you the names. There was no mention of the Gedung Kuning family's involvement at all and our friends asked us about this.

Doa selamat

We have already explained to you why we decline the offer for doa selamat that you would host at Gedung Kuning before the opening of the restaurant. We just had our annual haul. Besides, many of us are still upset at how Gedung Kuning was taken away from us; reason given that the house would be turned into a gallery café and not a money-making restaurant it was then and now. Hence, we feel that it's not right to even have a doa selamat there. The doa selamat is not for our family but would serve as good PR for your company.

Information about Kg Glam

You mentioned during our discussion at Khir's house that you don't know much about Kg Glam (this contradicts your statement that ["We are just being polite to listen more than talk at Abang Khir's house even though we already know the information. However, to show respect to Abang Khir we acknowledge his suggestions on naming our kueh cafe as Kota Raja"](#)). That was why we gave you the information and even I offered to do a simple write-up about Kg Glam free so that you can include it on the first page of your brochure/menu. Had we known that you already know so much about Kg Glam, we wouldn't offer you all that information.

Pls refer to your email of April 7:

["Write up on Kampung Gelam / Books"](#)

Yes, this will be interesting. Maybe what we can do other than inserting text on your coming books we could incorporate QR Codes so that the guest after reading it can scan the QRcodes and download the ebook version

from our Web Portal where we will develop the online payment gateway. We will be incorporating Digital Menu Pad to display our Menus and the ebook version of Gedung Kuning and Kampung Gelam can come in handy, we upsell!. This way the guest need not wait to get the GK books. Will work on this and share with you the details. To add colours, the actual book can also be on sale in our Balai Anjung.

In addition our team is also working on Augmented Reality (AR) software. This is under the TIP (Technology Innovation Programme). We might want to explore Kampung Gelam trail with you and Abg Khir. In my proposal to MHF last year, I have included this AR technology for the Kampung Gelam trail. We can take your book to a different level where we can incorporate this AR technology. Will discuss with you and Abg Khir again if you are keen to explore. Do let me know."

Only after learning about the above, did I suggest you hire us as consultant as what you had suggested required more consideration than for us to do it for free. I hold the copyrights to my book and website and according to the law, you must pay for usage of information.

If you recall my reply of April 8:

"Write up on Kampung Gelam / Books

About your suggestion of QR codes and download ebook... I'm not planning to have an e-book version of the Gedung Kuning book. I'm not technology-resistant, but as with most books of this nature, readers prefer to enjoy the photos, feel the book and let the words speak to them from the pages and not from some screen. However, you can inform them about the book which is on sale at the shop. That will definitely whet their appetite.

If you're keen to stock up my Gedung Kuning book, pls contact my distributor Rosli <rosli@apdsing.com>.

Same with forthcoming Kg Glam book. No ebook due to reasons above.

At this point, we're not keen in incorporating walking trail on a virtual platform. Sometimes technology takes away the fun the exploring. BUT another suggestion, you can incorporate information about Gedung Kuning in your AR. I'm a trained instructional designer and I can help you design the instructions for portal. However, you'll have to pay for my services via my company - <http://archipelago-consultancy.com/>

One of your colleagues emailed me earlier to ask information about the house. I asked her to refer to the website. But of course there are more info that is kept with us than on the website :)"

I mentioned about Gedung Kuning in your AR and not about Kg Glam. Pls go ahead and get all your information from the Malay Heritage Centre website or from Madam Zuraidah Abdullah's bio, other websites and Wikipedia that offer them free of charge. Since you already have all the resources, my free write-up about Kg Glam for your menu/brochure will be useless so I won't be doing it.

Gedung Kuning Book

You mentioned that "To add colours, the actual book can also be on sale in our Balai Anjung" in your email which then prompted me to tell you that if you're keen to stock up my book, you should contact the book distributor (which is a normal procedure). Pls check your facts first before saying "You also request to sell your books in Mamanda but we are required to call the Helang publisher/distributor ourselves. Isn't that biadab you think? You are directing us and yet we are doing you a favor?"

There's NO obligation for you to stock my books at Gedung Kuning. I thought visitors to Gedung Kuning would like to know about the history of the house (just like your colleague who emailed me to ask more about the house after surfing the website). The book is already available in bookstores in Singapore and Malaysia for those who want to buy it.

Our intention & yours

If you remember, it was **you** who emailed me first on 18 October 2011. And since I was leaving for the UK that day, I had asked you to contact my cousin Khir Johari. We are sincere to give our thoughts and opinions because we don't want Fig & Olive to repeat the same mistakes as Restoran Tepak Sireh that 'destroyed' our furniture and then didn't want to be responsible for them (broken mirrors, antique long table with holes from their buffet staples, the wooden decks they put up that caused termites).

Julina wanted us to touch base and we agreed to meet Julina because we hope the new MHF team will not make the same mistakes like the old one; I remember how I requested MHF to place the acknowledgement plaques on 27 February 2003 but the management only put up the plaques 3 years later in mid 2006, after my countless reminder emails.

You wrote in your email of April 7: ["The session was overwhelming and I came home flat till the next day exhausted from the wealth of information from a 3 hour session! We really value the frank and open communication and sharing with us ideas, contacts and leads. We will try to incorporate some of the ideas and suggestions and we hope to improve it along the way."](#)

Unless those words were empty words to make us feel good, I would think we had helped you a lot and sincerely. It's unfortunate that you see our efforts as otherwise now, merely because I suggested to be paid (see arguments above with regard to AR, TIP, digital menu pad). What I've done is not personal, it's only business. You forget that we are from a merchant family and we know how ethical business is done.

Wikipedia & Free Information

I am amused by your statement that ["as someone of your high intellectual should focus on writing to Wikipedia to update the facts and figures on Kampung Gelam so that people like us will get the right information."](#) So you're suggesting I give all the information to Wikipedia free so that businessmen like you can make money for them? Anyone who is serious about his work will not consult Wikipedia but will check other credible sources. Even NHB didn't just take the facts about Kg Glam from Wikipedia; they engaged qualified researchers to do documentation on Kg Glam (you were present when Julina told us that the researchers didn't do a good job and she asked me to help them for free, which I declined as it was unethical for us to do so).

Yes, you're ["not dumb and stupid"](#). In fact, I'm aware that you and Mas are a successful husband and wife team that won SRPING grants (like the TIP which allowed you to incorporate the AR) and many awards. And as a businessman, you know it's all about the money and that nothing is for free. Information is money. Since you said you could get those information for free, then pls go ahead and consult those sources. As a restaurateur, you know that ["ada rupa, ada harga"](#) and that a delicious meal comes with a high price. You too want the best for your restaurant. If not, you wouldn't have travelled out of Singapore to source for the best furniture etc, right?

The fact that Julina asked me to collaborate with MHF on my Kg Glam book late last year shows that I have serious contacts and knowledge of Kg Glam. I have declined her offer as there was no consideration on MHF's side, they said they could help with the book launch and not in the actual publication, research or give some grant. According to a fellow alumni Francis Bacon, "Knowledge is Power". And unfortunately, it doesn't come cheap.

I wish Fig & Olive the best.

Sincerely,

Hidayah

On Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 1:51 AM, Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com> wrote:

Dear Puan Hidayah

Thank you for your email. My wife and I know about adab dan budi bahasa. During our visit to Abang Khir's house we even brought our best Olive Oil that was specially flown from Italy as buah tangan. That is part of my adab as jangan datang dengan tangan kosong. Funny though you preach about adab and budi bahasa yet this email was sent to a police commander and a minister. Is that email etiquette? Honestly, you do not need them to educate my wife and I about adab and budi bahasa. Let's walk the talk.

None of them above, including you, attended our launch of Mamanda. We invited you to the launch but you decline, we offer to do doa selamat and gathering, it was decline. We are trying our best and bend backwards to ensure we build relationship and not burn ties.

During the launch (you may want to cross reference with Julina) we give acknowledgement to those whom have help us. We invited all those who have contribute on stage to be with us during the Pulut Kuning Ceremony. Isn't that beradab? Even our interns too from Singapore Poly was called up on stage to recognized her contributions. (Cross check, you may want to use a police commander above for help here, the girl in the BH front page photo from left, her name is Shahira, she is an interns). We have Malek Mattar who owns furniture company on stage whom hand hold us all the way to Central Java to source the best furniture and furnishings for Gedung Kuning. We have Chef Akber Ali who help us in sourcing the best kitchen technology and equipment for Malay food on stage, we have Abdel from Sri Warisan Som Said Performing Arts on stage and many more!

Why bother to call all these people on stage if we only want credits to ourselves? Next time make an effort to come when being invited. The last email we received from you is that if we want more information about Kampung Gelam we have to pay for your services as a consultant. Please note that we are not dumb and stupid, why pay for the information if we can get it for free. Just Google or go to Malay Heritage website you can find all about Origins of Kampung Gelam from Madam Zuraidah Abdullah bio. We are just being polite to listen more than talk at Abang Khir 's house even though we already know the information. However, to show respect to Abang Khir we acknowledge his suggestions on naming our kueh cafe as Kota Raja.

Anyway, the first time I met with Abang Khir at Singapore Post Paya Lebar Delifrance and later at his home, his intention was to help, contribute and add colors to Gedung Kuning. Why sudden change of direction.

Do you think then it is fair of you to call my wife and I biadab and kurang ajar? You also request to sell your books in Mamanda but we are required to call the Helang publisher/distributor ourselves. Isn't that biadab you think? You are directing us and yet we are doing you a favor?

Let's do some soul searching here, as we are here to work together as a team, be it you, Abang Khir, MHF and the rest of the community that there are bigger challenges and responsibility towards our community and to

uphold our heritage. We are investing millions of dollars to uphold the pride of our heritage. Let's not fight with each other over small & petty matters as someone of your high intellectual should focus on writing to Wikipedia to update the facts and figures on Kampung Gelam so that people like us will get the right information.

Thank you.

Zul & Mas

On 15 Apr, 2012, at 11:03 AM, Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Zul & Mas,

Congratulations again on Fig & Olive's success in getting the tender to run Gedung Kuning. We are confident that you will do a good job.

I read Berita Harian's articles 'Rancangan hidupkan semula Gedung Kuning' and Eksport' konsep restoran bagi martabatkan makanan Melayu' with interest - <http://cyberita.asia1.com.sg/mekoniaga/story/0,6879,212029,00.html>? & <http://cyberita.asia1.com.sg/mekoniaga/story/0,6879,212049,00.html>?

My cousin Khir Johari and I are happy to learn that you have taken our suggestions especially in the naming of the rooms such as Kafe Kota Raja, Lounge Tembaga, Kota Dalam (it should be Kampong Dalam) etc. We trust that Mamanda will also benefit from the contacts of the exclusive traditional cakes sellers that we have passed to you.

However, it is unfortunate that you did not mention about the people whom you had consulted who gave you some historical lessons on Kampong Glam, suggested those names and reminded you of the importance of linking them to history. You only mentioned "Kami dapati kawasan Kampong Gelam memang kawasan dagangan, orang Melayu dahulu kala membuat kapal, berdagang tembaga dan intan sehingga wujud nama Kampung Intan dan Kampung Tembaga di kawasan ini. Kami tidak mahu nama-nama itu luput dan berharap mengembalikan sejarah itu melalui Mamanda".

As Malays, we hold *adab* and *budi bahasa* in the highest honour and it is only courtesy that you credit us who have advised you on the naming of the rooms and cafe which are now in use. This is because some people might think the appointed advisor is the one who gave you the names and background to Kampong Glam.

Thank you.

ps. I have also informed the writer of those articles that my great grandfather bought Gedung Kuning on 30 July 1912 from R.M.P.C Mootiah Chitty (<http://www.gedungkuning.com/history/gedungkuning.htm>). The way the facts are presented gave the impression that he bought it from the royal family.

I also hope that the Malay Heritage Foundation and Centre will use the extensive research that I have done about Gedung Kuning and not misrepresent historical and legal facts.

Warmest regards,

Hidayah Amin, M.Sc (Lehigh), M.Phil (Cambridge)

Archipelago Consultancy - Inspiring Great Imaginations

Reg. No.: 53210603B | Tel: +65 9625 0032 | www.archipelago-consultancy.com