



Misrepresentation of facts on Mamanda's advertisement

faizah jamal <breathconnection@yahoo.com>

Fri, Jun 7, 2013 at 2:22 PM

Reply-To: faizah jamal <breathconnection@yahoo.com>

To: Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com>

Cc: "Rosa DANIEL (NHB)" <rosa_daniel@nhb.gov.sg>, "Alvin TAN (NHB)" <Alvin_TAN@nhb.gov.sg>, "Norsaleen SALLEH (NHB)" <Norsaleen_SALLEH@nhb.gov.sg>, "ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH (SPF)" <zuraidah_abdullah@spf.gov.sg>, Julina Khusaini <julina@mhf.org.sg>, "mlsss@nus.edu.sg" <mlsss@nus.edu.sg>, "idris@sph.com.sg" <idris@sph.com.sg>, "siti_habibah@sza.com.sg" <siti_habibah@sza.com.sg>, "idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg" <idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg>, arohim <arohim@singnet.com.sg>, "mnaz@vsapac.com" <mnaz@vsapac.com>, Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar <hidayah.bakar@lasalle.edu.sg>, "zuraida@mendaki.org.sg" <zuraida@mendaki.org.sg>, "Lionel YEO (STB)" <lionel_yeo@stb.gov.sg>, "saat@sph.com.sg" <saat@sph.com.sg>, "warren@sph.com.sg" <warren@sph.com.sg>, Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>, Mas <mas@mamanda.com.sg>, Khir Johari <khir19@gmail.com>

Dear Zulkarnine

Thank you again for your email, and for expressing your unhappiness.

I am sorry once again to have to disappoint you. You are ascribing too much to my intention where none exists.

I am very happy to note that you mentioned the flyer was meant to generate awareness of Kampung Gelam, because that is precisely the spirit in which I have sent the email. The story of Haji Yusof and his family staying in Gedung Kuning for not an insignificant period of time is as much the story of the building and indeed part of the layers of Kampung Gelam, as the building's royal roots are.

In fact as a 'local' I would argue that this familiarity with the residents themselves makes this aspect of Gedung Kuning real to us. Among the many cherished memories that Gedung Kuning holds for me is where my mother and I would go the house, and wait to be joined by Mak Mon and Nek Cik Timah, ladies who used to live there, every Tuesday afternoon on our way to Masjid Hajjah Fatimah for our religious classes with Arwah Ustad Daud in the '70s. It is little stories like these, probably insignificant to other people, that make the place memorable. It is what makes a house a home, and a location, a place which grounds us.

I am sure you understand this.

As to the blood ties, once again I have to disappoint you. The fact that there are blood ties is really neither here nor there. In fact there are many others in Kampung Gelam that my family is related to, in some way or other, such is the nature of a 'kampung'.

Surely that does not mean that my concern is so personal and so prejudiced that it can't also be professional. Again you are ascribing intentions where none exists. As you know, I cc-ed the email to BOTH Hidayah Amin and Khir Johari as these are the two family representatives on this issue whom I am familiar with.

On a professional front, I had not mentioned earlier that I had spent 6 of the 14 years as a member of FOM being a volunteer docent at ACM and NMS. Historical information, accuracy and local relevance is important in our role as docents. We take this very seriously in our rigorous training and high standards even though we are volunteers. In the last 8 years, I had also been asked by the FOM – ACM docent training teams to conduct walks to Kampung Gelam as part of their training not just because I am a member and a docent, but also because of my own long family history, ties to the

people in this neighbourhood, and real life experiences to this heritage area. The reason why FOM-ACM keep inviting me year after year is because such personal stories resonate far better than the impersonal ones given by tourist guides, good though these guides may be. You would be happy to know that I always preface my walks as one based on my own experiences and to encourage the participants to learn more from other 'locals' like Khir Johari, who had himself been invited recently by FOM to share his deep insights and interesting personal experiences of Kampung Gelam.

These personal aspects and professional experiences, and my stand on heritage and environment both built and natural, ranging from Kampung Gelam to Bukit Brown to Pulau Ubin, are the very reasons why I was nominated, and later appointed as Nominated MP with this very niche platform. They form a major part of many of my speeches. My stand on these issues is public knowledge. I would be remiss in my role if I do not address my concern as I had in my email to your company.

I am sure you would also be happy to know that contrary to what you have mentioned in your emails, I have in fact supported your restaurant. I have taken my family to your Kelantan Food Festival last year. In fact Mas was there just when we were about to leave. I introduced myself to her, and I thanked her for the experience .

My mother had fun, reminiscing and reminding me of what each room in Gedung Kuning was for, including the room we were dining in. We even lingered after dinner as my mother wanted to reminisce some more. It was a rush of memories both happy and sad for her, as some of her best friends lived there.

Personally, hearing her telling the stories and bringing up names of people I know, makes the experience of dining there richer for me. It is not just a restaurant but was once a place where people were born, got married, lived, loved and fought, laughed and cried, and died.

You would be pleased to also know that I repeated the experience yet again – when my friend who now lives in Hawaii, was in town. I shared the stories that my mother told me with my friend, who like me, found the dining experience meaningful because of the stories.

I am sure, as someone who does not know me well at all, you would be happy to be proven wrong in saying that I do not support your establishment now that you know otherwise.

I have always believe that one must do the right thing. For me the right thing to do in this instance when I saw your ad, is ask that it provide historical and 'local' completeness. There are, after all, layers to any story.

I agree with you that there is no need for a lengthy explanation. It can be a simple one-line statement in your flyer in addition to what is already there, for eg that 'this building was also the family home of the wealthy and successful Malay businessman of Javanese descent, Haji Yusof ' especially since this fact is in the consciousness of the local community. I also believe that the inclusion in simple one-line statements of the other well-known names you have raised would be equally worthy, though these are names that create less familiarity with the local Kampung Gelam community.

Since I believe in doing the right thing I would agree with you that if it feels right to you that you lodge a complaint against me, then that is what you would have to do.

Best regards
Faizah Jamal
Nominated Member of Parliament

To: faizah jamal <breathconnection@yahoo.com>

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