

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



News 2013

Building Wrap Removed - "Clearwater Board Says Scientology Violated Sign Laws"



Photo: Jim Damaske, Tampa Bay Times

"The wrap covered a tent near the Church of Scientology's Super Power Building in Clearwater. It has since been removed."

A wrap that until Tuesday covered a massive Church of Scientology tent downtown violated the city's sign laws, a municipal board ruled Wednesday.

The Code Enforcement Board also said if the church places other illegal wraps around the 150,000-square-foot tent that it could be fined \$500 a day as a repeat offender. No fine was imposed Wednesday.

The church removed the controversial wrap Tuesday, prompting city officials to wonder if the church planned to attach other wraps for celebrations later this year.

'That may very well be the case,' said Ed Armstrong, an attorney representing the church. But Armstrong and church representative Sarah Heller declined to confirm whether more wraps were in the works.

Instead, the church argued that the wrap wasn't a sign, but art albeit intended only for its own members.



Photo: James Borchuck, Tampa Bay Times

Board member Mike Riordon asked why the church didn't seek the city's permission or feedback before putting it up.

'How is it that you think people in general would really believe that you didn't know there would be an issue with this?' Riordon asked Heller.

'If we'd considered it a sign, we absolutely would have come in for a permit,' Heller responded.

Armstrong and fellow attorney Gina Grimes said the city's actions infringed on religious freedom, risked violating federal laws protecting that freedom and showed faulty interpretations of its own ordinances.

A city attorney said the issue wasn't about art or religion, but signs.

'We are simply asking that they follow the rules just as any other good corporate citizen, religious citizen or even just a regular plain Jane or Joe Citizen would do,' said Camilo A. Soto, assistant city attorney.

The purpose of the multi-colored wrap that included the phrase 'Golden Age of Tech' and an acronym for 'Keeping Scientology Working' was aesthetic and religious, Heller said.

'They have meanings for Scientologists and to make it look prettier,' Heller said.

The board ruled 6-1 that the church had violated the city's sign code...

-- Charlie Frago, Tampa Bay Times

[Read entire article here>](#)
[Read additional coverage here>](#)

December Events



Fun Festivals and Events

Exotic Dancers Wanted!

Apply Now to Replace The 19 Story
Dancer Whose Performance is "More
Stripper Than Salsa"

Central Florida

Dec 5

Christmas in the Park
Winter Park

Dec 5

2013 Holiday Tour of Homes
Ormond Beach

Dec 6

Harmony Winter Festival
Harmony

Dec 6

Christmas in the Square
Sanford

Dec 6-7

Tampa's Christmas Market
Tampa

Dec 6-7

Sanford Historic Trust Tour of Homes
Sanford

Dec 6

Downtown DeLand Merchant
Holiday Open House
DeLand

Dec 6

Light Up Flagler
New Smyrna Beach

Dec 6

Jazz Friday at Fossaner Museum of
Art
Melbourne

Dec 7

Jaycee's Christmas Parade
DeLand

Dec 7

61st annual Ye Olde Hometown
Christmas Parade
Winter Park

Dec 7

Orlando Pottery Festival

Dec 7

23rd Annual Lighted Boat Tour
Mount Dora

Dec 7

First Saturday Jam, Barberville

Dec 7

New Smyrna Beach Christmas



Photo: Miami Herald

The InterContinental Hotel in Miami unveiled a 19-story dancing woman as part of their \$30 million renovation. The light show is visible for miles.

"The 19-story dancing lady still has her moves, but after adorning the side of the InterContinental Miami for the last year — and earning plenty of second glances — she's ready to retire.

Thursday, the downtown hotel will hold auditions to find its next 'mover and shaker.' But unlike the current dancer, whose style is more stripper than salsa, the new generation will likely shake a little less suggestively.

'We won't rule anything out,' said Robert Hill, the hotel's general manager. 'But yes, I would expect that these dancers would dance more to their genre.'

The 31-year-old hotel installed the digital canvas last year as part of a \$30 million renovation meant to upgrade the property and create buzz. That mission was accomplished early on when Entourage actor Jeremy Piven, brought in to flip the switch at the unveiling last December, showed up late to the ceremony over concerns that the image was too risqué.

Since then, the hair-flipping, arms-in-the-air silhouette has entertained, amused or annoyed from its spot in the city's skyline...

Little is known about the woman behind the current image. David Schwartz, media producer for technology design firm Fresh Juice Global, worked on the project with an animator in Shanghai and said the woman was a Russian who performed in China.

The plan has always been to change up the content, Hill said, and even now the dancing lady alternates with scrolling letters that convey messages such as 'Welcome to Miami' or, when appropriate, 'Heat Win.' But the image of the dancer was popular — and intriguing — enough that the hotel decided to continue the theme with local performers whose stories could be publicized.

That decision led to Thursday's 'dance off,' which will be judged by Miami City Ballet principal dancer Jeanette Delgado, the Miami Heat's Clara Stroude-Vazquez and Jane Castro, a singer who appeared on the VH1 reality show Tough Love Miami. Hill said as many as three winners could be chosen, each ideally specializing in styles of dance that represent Miami. In addition to local fame, the prize is a two-night stay at the hotel.

Hill said the initial audition can accommodate 400 dancers, who will perform in groups of eight to a song chosen by the hotel. (Tip: That song is likely to be Hotel Room Service by Pitbull.) Judges will choose 30 or 40 finalists, who will be asked to perform in their own genres Friday. Winners should be chosen by

Parade
New Smyrna Beach
Dec 7
Sunset & Symphony Holiday Concert
Lake Wales
Dec 7
Port Orange Christmas Parade &
Tree Lighting
Port Orange
Dec 7
4th Annual Moving Towards a Cure
5K
Tampa
Dec 7,13-15, 26-30
Wild Wonderland at Tampa's Lowry
Park Zoo
Tampa
Dec 8
Santa PAWS
Mount Dora
Dec 8
Winter Park Boat Parade & Water
Ski Show
Winter Park
Dec 8
Home for the Holidays Nighttime
Parade
Ormond Beach
Dec 8
Winter Arts Festival
Tampa
Dec 13-14
Candlelight Tours of Fort Foster
Tampa
Dec 14
Christmas in the Park with Snow
Mount Dora
Dec 14
Brooksville Christmas Parade
Brooksville
Dec 14
Snow Fest
Maitland
Dec 14
Christmas in the Park with Snow
Mount Dora
Dec 14
Parade of Lights
Sanford
Dec 14-15
Winter Wonderland
Daytona Beach
Dec 14-15
Wine & Chocolate Festival

Friday night, and a new dancing man or woman could appear on the side of the building in time for Art Basel festivities in early December.

Delgado said judges have some marching orders: They need to choose dancers who exemplify Miami — and whose movements will translate well into a contained vertical space.

Although familiar with the hotel's dancing lady, Delgado said she never knew the back story.

'I thought it was a really awesome idea of them to make it something a little bit more representative of Miami and the way Miami is moving culturally and artistically,' she said. 'To make it less like a club lady and maybe more like a form of dance that's specific.' "

Very Instructive Video



Photo: Scenic Miami-Dade, Inc.

Hotel management on video states:

" ...digital art wall on two facades will change the city skyline forever"

BUT apparently feel the need to explain this will not disturb guests INSIDE their own hotel:

"...a guest looking out the window is going to see nothing, which is the kinda interesting part of it. The technology that's up there is an LED light strip at the top of every window on the window frame inside the guest room. But that is sealed inside a metal frame that's sealed against the window and it only penetrates out through the window and you can not see it inside the guest room at all."

-- Hannah Sampson, Miami Herald

[Read entire article here>](#)

What ARE Miami's City and County Mayors Teaching Over at the Children's Museum?

Clermont

Dec 14-15

The Nutcracker

Sarasota

Dec 16-24

Sarasota Snow Fest

Dec 17

Climb to the Moon

Ponce Inlet

Dec 18-21

Candlelight Tours of Lilian Place

Daytona Beach

Dec 19-23

The Nutcracker

Orlando

Dec 19-24, 26

Christmas Celebration of Lights

Homosassa

Dec 20

Caroling Night Downtown

DeLand

Dec 20-21

Winter Waterland

Weeki Wachee State Park

Dec 21

Santa Cruisin' Downtown DeLand

Classic Car Show

DeLand

Dec 28

Art Walk on Flagler

New Smyrna Beach

Dec 29

Orlando Citrus Parade

Orlando

Dec 31

New Year's Eve Celebration

New Smyrna Beach

[Read more >](#)

South Florida

Dec 1-31

Holiday Nights at Edison and Ford

Winter Estates, Fort Myers

Until Dec 31

Festival of Lights at Fishermen's

Village, Punta Gorda

Dec 1-4

2013 International Sculpture



Photo: Scenic Miami-Dade, Inc.

"Miami Children's Museum Lights up the Sky"

"From the MacArthur Causeway you can't miss it, even if you wanted to" -- Erik Bojnansky, Biscayne Times

"On November 14, 2013 Scenic Miami-Dade sent a letter to their City and County Mayors:

... In May 2012, the Miami City Commission voted 4-1 to 'authorize' the unlawful installation of programmable signs on the exterior walls of three buildings at city owned property, including the Miami Children's Museum on Watson Island.

Despite vigorous public objection -- which included presentation of a written opinion by the Miami-Dade County Attorney that such installations would be illegal pursuant to Section 33-96.1 of the County Code -- Mayor Regalado, you failed to veto that 'approval.'

Despite vigorous public objection, Mayor Gimenez, you failed to respond, intervene and enforce the governing statute that makes those signs entirely illegal, the Sign Code of your very own Miami-Dade County government....

The Miami Children's Museum has installed and activated three programmable signs on just two of its exterior walls alongside the heavily traveled MacArthur Causeway.

Today motorists are shown ads for cruise-ship vacations, air travel to foreign destinations, resort stays in the Dominican Republic, and tickets to techno-savvy expositions... among other tantalizing commercial offers.

These three sign installations and all of those ads are illegal...

Ten simple requirements have existed within the Sign Code since 1994 for any programmable sign, including those newly installed on the outside walls of the Miami Children's Museum, to be legal.

One of those 10 legal requirements is that the leasehold property on which the sign is located be at least 10 acres in size.

Another of those 10 legal requirements is that only goods and services and products available for sale on the sign's premises may be advertised.

You cannot buy a Norwegian Cruise Line ticket at the Miami Children's Museum. You cannot buy an Interjet airline ticket at the Miami Children's Museum. You cannot buy a stay at Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic at the Miami Children's Museum. And you cannot buy a ticket to the 2013 Miami Tech Summit and Holiday Bash there either, because the event is free -- but the advertisement is illegal nonetheless because the commercial event takes place at Marlins Park, many miles away from the Miami Children's Museum.

The signs installations and operations are illegal because the Miami Children's

Symposium
Miami

Dec 3-8
Red Dot Fair, Miami

Dec 4-31
Annual Christmas Light Canal Tours
Punta Gorda

Dec 5-8
Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami
Beach

Dec 5-8
Fort Taylor Pirate Invasion
Key West

Dec 6
9th Annual Florida Keys Holiday
Festival
Islamorda

Dec 6-8
Sarasota Craft Show
Sarasota

Dec6-Jan 1
Visit the Famous 100ft Christmas
Tree
Boynton Beach

Dec 7
Fort Myers Beach Boat Parade, Fort
Myers Beach

Dec 7
Christmas Boat Parade
Venice

Dec 7-8
Winter Fine Arts Festival
Englewood

Dec 7-8
Luminary Festival
Sanibel and Captiva

Dec 7-8
Buckler's Craft Fair
West Palm Beach

Dec 8, 15
Historic Lighted Inn Tours
Key West

Dec 8
Key West Lighted Boat Parade
Key West

Dec 9-10, 16-17
Christmas Rail-Boat Trips
Fort Myers

Dec 13
Barnacle Under Moonlight
Coconut Grove

Dec 13
Boynton and Delray Beach Holiday
Boat Parade

Museum's leasehold property is far less than 10 acres in size, contrary to the requirement of law. The signs' operations and content are illegal because the goods and services and products broadcast on and by them have absolutely nothing to do with, and are entirely unavailable at 980 MacArthur Causeway, street address of the Miami Children's Museum, again contrary to the requirement of law.

The signs' operations further violates the Sign Code requirement that Class C commercial signs -- which the three newly attached to the Miami Children's Museum building most certainly are -- must be at least 100 feet from any school.

The Miami Children's Museum's own charter school operates only a few feet away, right inside the exterior walls to which its three Class C commercial signs are affixed, contrary to the requirement of law.

The signs' installations also violate the minimum spacing rules between commercial signs as required by Florida Statutes and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regulations.

... Assistant Miami City Manager Alice Bravo, from her testimony [official meeting minutes on Page 32] at the City Commission's meeting of May 24, 2012: 'So for example, [at the Miami Children's Museum] on MacArthur Causeway you could have one sign that's visible from the westbound direction, one sign that's visible from the eastbound direction, and you couldn't have two that are visible from the [westbound or] eastbound direction without running afoul of the FDOT criteria.'

-- Scenic Miami Dade, Inc.

[Visit Scenic Miami Dade to read entire letter>](#)

Driving Through Florida:

J. C. Penny Memorial Scenic Highway's Tree Canopy



Photo: jcpennescenichighway.org

Dec 13-14

Florida's Creative Coast Weekend

Pine Island

Dec 14

Holiday Boat Parade

Key Largo

Dec 14

Winterfest Boat Parade

Dec 14

Big Pine & The Lower Keys Island

Art Festival

Big P Dec 15

24thrd Annual Peace River Lighted

Boat Parade

Punta Gorda

Dec 18 - 23

Flagler Museum Holiday Evening

Tours

Palm Beach

Dec 19

Third Thursday Art Walk

Islamorada

Dec 20

Downtown Gallery Walk

Punta Gorda

Dec 21-22

Holiday Pops Concerts

Fort Myers

Dec 31

New Year's Eve Shoe Drop

Celebration

Key West

[Read more >](#)**North Florida****Dec 1 - Jan****1**

Festival of Lights

White Springs

Dec 6

First Friday Art Walk

St

Augustine

Dec 6

Camellia Christmas 2013

Tallahassee

Dec 6-7

7th Annual Holiday Home Tour

Amelia Island

Dec 6-8, 13-15

Three Rivers State Park Christmas

"The S.R. 16 corridor, the gateway to the Town of Penney Farms (near Jacksonville), traverses a community that is over 100 years old and offers a flashback to the "small town' America of old in the midst of urban development. There is much to see and do along this designated stretch of S.R. 16 and the loop of local streets in and around town.

From first glance visitors are awed by this picturesque and historically significant town, dating back to 1922. Prior to being the platted community originally known as Long Branch City, there was a settlement of clustered homesteads among the vast cattle ranges.

Now, travel this scenic highway, rich in history and steeped in culture. Look up at the lush canopy of ancient oaks and magnolias arching above. You will be tempted to take a pleasant stroll or a quiet bike ride. Close your eyes and you can hear the birds, smell the clean air, feel the soft breeze rustling the trees, and even hear the train chugging toward Green Cove Springs, as it did a century ago.

Come and enjoy the experience!"

-- jcpenneyscenichighway.org

[Visit the website for more information >](#)

Outdoor Advertising Industry Legal:

Lamar Advertising Requests Conversion to REIT



Photo: CoStar.com

"In the equivalent of an NFL referee throwing a penalty flag and then picking it up and saying 'never mind,' the IRS has notified three firms seeking to reorganize their real property holdings into new REITs that it will resume working on their conversion requests.

The three companies in the process of REIT conversions - Lamar Advertising Co., Iron Mountain Inc. and Equinix Inc. - announced that the IRS had notified each that they could continue the REIT conversion process.

Early last summer, the three firms reported that the IRS had formed a 'working group' to consider what constitutes real property for REIT purposes and that such conversions would not go forward until the IRS group concluded its work. Observers believe the increasing number of 'non-traditional' real estate owner-operators seeking the tax-shielding REIT structure may have prompted the IRS scrutiny. Lamar Advertising is a major billboard and transit display advertising firm, Iron Mountain is a document management and storage firm and Equinix operates data centers.

The notifications last week mean that the IRS has again begun consideration of existing and new 'private letter rulings' addressing REIT conversion requests by companies.

"We do not anticipate that the IRS working group's deliberations will result in

Light Show

Sneads

Dec 7

5K Reindeer Race

Panama City Beach

Dec 7

Dudley Farm Cane Day

Newberry

Dec 7

26th Annual Winter Festival

Tallahassee

Dec 7-8

Annual Market Days

Tallahassee

Dec 7, 14, 21

Santa's Storybook Tea Party

Amelia Island

Dec 8

45th Annual Garden Club Christmas

Tour of Homes

St. Augustine

Dec 13-14

6th Annual Southern Pines Blues

and BBQ Festival

Perry

Dec 13-15, 26-27

Santa of the Rainbow

Dunnellon

Dec 13-14

Holiday Magic

Tallahassee

Dec 14

Annual Holiday Parade and Lawn

Mower Parade

Havana

Dec 14

Artrageous Artwalk

Fernandina Beach

Dec 21

The Ichetucknee Time Machine

Fort White

Dec 28-29

Old Town Arts & Crafts Show

St

Augustine

Dec 31

New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop

Panama City Beach

[Read more >](#)

any substantial changes to the application of the long-standing definition of real property to specific assets,' said Dianne Umberger, National Tax REIT leader for leading tax and corporate advisory firm EY. 'Rather, we believe the IRS will continue to apply existing law, including IRS precedent, consistently and thoroughly, on a case-by-case basis, as it has done in the past.'

During the past year, the IRS received numerous requests for private letter rulings, some of which involved new asset classes during a time when there was a vacancy at the division handling REIT matters, Umberger points out. The goal was not to put the kibosh on REIT conversions, but rather to coordinate the requests carefully to ensure consistency with its decisions.

The announcements by these three companies is a positive sign that the conversion ruling process has resumed, she said, adding that not all taxpayers that seek such guidance from the IRS will be successful.

'We will continue to monitor this process and what it means for companies in oil and gas, telecommunications, leisure and other sectors of the economy considering a possible REIT conversion or similar transaction,' she said.

Lamar Advertising said it remains hopeful it will receive a definitive response to its request to convert into a REIT on Jan. 1, 2014...."

-- Mark Heschmeyer, CoStar.com

[Visit CoStar to read entire article here>](#)



Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.