

Some of the top stories recently featured on STL TV Visit us at <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/> **5 minutes with STL TV's Ambassador, Gilberto Pinela**

One of the most recognizable personalities on STL TV is Gilberto Pinela, co-host of the Best of the STL and host of Ahora San Luis, our Spanish-language program. A native of Puerto Rico, Pinela is a tireless advocate and spokesman for St. Louis' Hispanic community, but he's also a gregarious showman and a leader in STL TV's marketing efforts. Sometimes it seems like he's everywhere at once. Not surprisingly, Pinela was named 2009 STL TV Ambassador of the Year at the station's recent Jewel Awards gala at the Old Rock House. What's Up was able to get him to slow down long enough to answer a few questions:



STL TV: When did you come to the US?

GILBERTO: I came to the mainland from San Juan in January 1981 to study - believe it or not - hospitality and tourism. The goal was to go back to Puerto Rico and get a job as an administrator for the Puerto Rican Tourism Company. I worked for Marriott for some time and in October 1991 I was

transferred to St. Louis to the Marriott Pavilion.

STL TV: When did you join STL TV?

GILBERTO: I joined as a volunteer and part-time on-air talent in June 2001 to work on Ahora San Luis with Cecilia Velazquez. Simultaneously, I worked with my good friend Michael doing the marketing and promotions and some sales for The Greenery Plant Co., while also working and involved heavily with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as president and later first executive director.

STL TV: You were named STL TV Ambassador of the Year. How does that honor feel? Do people recognize you everywhere you go?

GILBERTO: Honestly, it's a great honor and I am proud of the recognition as we work very hard to ensure people know we are the best way to experience St. Louis via television. I feel good about it, but I don't think about it much (not wanting to be a snob). People do recognize me most everywhere I go, sometimes for Ahora San Luis, where I have people greeting me in Spanish or congratulating me for a job well done. I get tons of recognition also from Best of the STL and often I get a bit embarrassed when someone stops me to get a photo or ask me how to be a part of the show. Recently a friend and I were walking out of the Fox, and three people stopped me to say thank you for the work done on Best of the STL, Ahora San Luis and STL TV. When we got to the car, my friend said, "I'm aware you are a TV personality for STL TV, but man, I just really realized you ARE kind of famous!"



Gilberto Pinela shares a light moment with co-hosts Cassandra Walker and Ivy Hartman on the set of The Best of the STL.

STL TV: What's your favorite experience as host of BSTL?

GILBERTO: Truly, it would have to be meeting so many interesting guests and having the opportunity to make the community aware of all the good we have to offer. It makes me happy to be able to promote an event or feature a person or organization that, without our support, would not be able to get the attention they need.

STL TV: What's your worst experience on BSTL?

GILBERTO: To this day I could say nothing yet, but there have been some funny ones. The first time I did the show I almost dropped a cake from one of our sponsors on the floor as I was talking about it. I lifted the cake and it slipped right there on live TV. Lucky for me I was able to rescue it before it hit the floor. Also, one time, the studio was so hot, the lights went out in the middle of the show while Cassandra and I were on LIVE! But as professionals, if I may say, we just continued talking as if nothing ever happened.

STL TV: Tell us something about you that nobody knows.

GILBERTO: I want to continue to work to help Latinos become educated and continue to collaborate with local Hispanic organizations wanting to provide assistance for college-bound Hispanics. I can say in some ways I am self educated, as my parents did not know better (just the way things were), and did not see me going farther than high school. I am the first person in my family to complete college. So, encouraging Latinos to go to school and finish college is a priority, a hobby and something many may not know about me.

STL TV: At the end of the day, what is your favorite thing to do?

GILBERTO: Work out! Work out! Work out!, which gives me time to relax and just be in my own universe. I believe truly your body is a temple and if you take care of it, it will take care of you. Diet and exercise are very important in my very hectic life. That's the only way I can be called: the "Rican energizer!"

Fleeing genocide: Three personal stories



City Corner is a current events program bringing you timely and relevant information about St. Louis' people, places, and events. City officials, Community leaders, and others discuss topics like business and economics, sports and entertainment, or neighborhoods and health.

On City Corner this month, host Sarah Thompson talked with three young men who were refugees due to the genocide in their homeland of Congo. They each had to flee their homes and families to save their lives. Now living in St. Louis, they are sharing their stories to raise awareness about genocide. They are also preserving the tradition and culture of their people, the Banyamulenge, through special project called "Imuhira." One of the young men, Justin Semahoro Kimenyera, is featured in the upcoming documentary "The Last Survivor" by Righteous Pictures.



THE LODGE OF FOUR SEASONS
ANOTHER FOUR SEASONS EXPERIENCE

The Lodge of Four Seasons CONTEST

Give us 10 good reasons

That's right! Give us 10 good reasons why you should win a free weekend stay at The Lodge of the Four Seasons in Missouri's Ozarks. Go to <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/stltv/> and fill out the contest form. You must be 21 to enter. Entry must be received by December 4, 2009. To enter the contest you must WATCH THE VIDEO and complete all fields. Winner will be notified by telephone or e-mail.



It's scary Behind the Scenes!

The Darkness haunted house in Soulard is in now in its 15th year and is in the Top 13 haunted house venues in the nation (Top 13 - get it?). On the heels of Halloween, President of the Board of Aldermen Lewis Reed bravely took viewers on a tour of the Darkness and talks to owner Jim Kelly (shown here) and set designer John Ives. Check out our program schedule for air times of a chilling episode of Behind the Scenes with Lewis Reed.



Now Showing ON STL TV

Check our program guide for air times



Native St. Louis filmmaker and teacher Kevin Coleman discusses his film "Snapshot," with Indie Theatre host Chris Clark. Kevin, a graduate of the American Film Institute, also talks with Chris about his training and experiences in filmmaking and his upcoming projects. Joining them is actor Demarko Williams, who is scheduled to play the lead role in Kevin's next film, "Elon Settles, The Movie."

Explore the history of treasure hunting as City Corner host Steve Potter focuses on the St. Louis History Museum. Starting Nov. 6 is the St. Louis Shakes company's production of "Treasure Island,"

which kicks off the new season of performing arts at the museum. "It's a wonderful, rip-roaring good time, based on pirates" says director of theater projects Elizabeth Pickard, "and what could be more fun than that?" It ties into the museum's new treasure exhibition, named, appropriately enough, "Treasure!" The exhibit is open now through Jan. 3, 2010, and explores the history of treasure hunting.

On the current episode of Ahora San Luis visits SSM St. Mary's Hospital to talk about Health Care and the Hispanic community with Dr. Pedro Suarez and Dr. Richard Ihnat. Host Gilberto Pinela also stops by Centro de Salud Natural on South Kingshighway to explore holistic medicine with Gabriel Cardenas. On the Next Ahora San Luis, Gilberto talks higher education with staff and students from Fontbonne University.

There's a lot of funny business at STL TV. Catch the station's new LOL (Laugh Out Loud) Comedy Special featuring some of the St. Louis area's top comedians. Check our program schedule for air times.

And now, a word from our viewers:

"I feel like the coverage that STL TV provides for the Junior Football League was great. I think it gave our kids a sense of one day they can be on TV and possibly play in the NFL and be featured in that manner. It's a great opportunity." - Antonia Harrison, parent



Jeff Vernetti, Kim Hudson and Don Johnson, Commentators for JFL Monday Night Football Games