

Your healthy smile may be due to May's honoree

The next time you enjoy a healthy smile, think of Dr. David Ast. His research into water fluoridation may be part of the reason toothy smiles are lasting longer today.

To honor Ast for his service, he has been named Leisure Worlder of the Month by the Leisure World Historical Society. An honoring ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 6 at 10 a.m. in Clubhouse 6. The public is invited to attend the program sponsored by Home Federal Savings.

Ast, a native New Yorker, joined the the New York State Department of Health in 1938 to direct the dental health program and stayed, as director, until 1966.

Probably the single-most important aspect of his career began in 1944 when he initiated the Newburgh-Kingston Caries-Fluorine Study, which sought to control dental decay on a mass basis by adding sodium fluoride to drinking water. The results of this controlled study led to fewer cavities for children in New York State and later in other states.

In 1946 Ast took a leave of absence to go overseas as chief dental officer

for the American Joint Distribution Committee. His assignment was to assist in establishing dental health care programs for displaced persons in camps in Europe.

Ast retired at the end of 1971 having contributed to numerous advances in the dental health field, and having garnered numerous honors for his work.

David and Isabel Ast moved to Leisure World in 1973 and immediately became involved in community activities. Isabel devotes much of her time to the Braille Transcribers while David was one of the organizers and a president of the Community Association, was president of Common Cause, a member of the GRF Subcommittee on Health and Medical Care Delivery and is currently on GRF's Health and Welfare Committee.

He also helped organize and served as president of the Leisure World Laguna Hills Regions of the Orange County Jewish Federation. He's a member of the Academians, Temple Judea and enjoys golf and walking.

He sums up his life this way: "When I was on the job I frequently would



Dr. David Ast

put my hand in my pocket and pull out a slip of paper which might say 'Be sure to have report for the Commissioner by Tuesday p.m.' or another note might read 'You have a conference with the Governor on Friday at 10 a.m.' Today I put my hand in my pocket and I will most likely pull out a note which will read "Be sure to bring home a pound of coffee and a dozen eggs."