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DAVE MUNGENAST, ISDT STAR!**

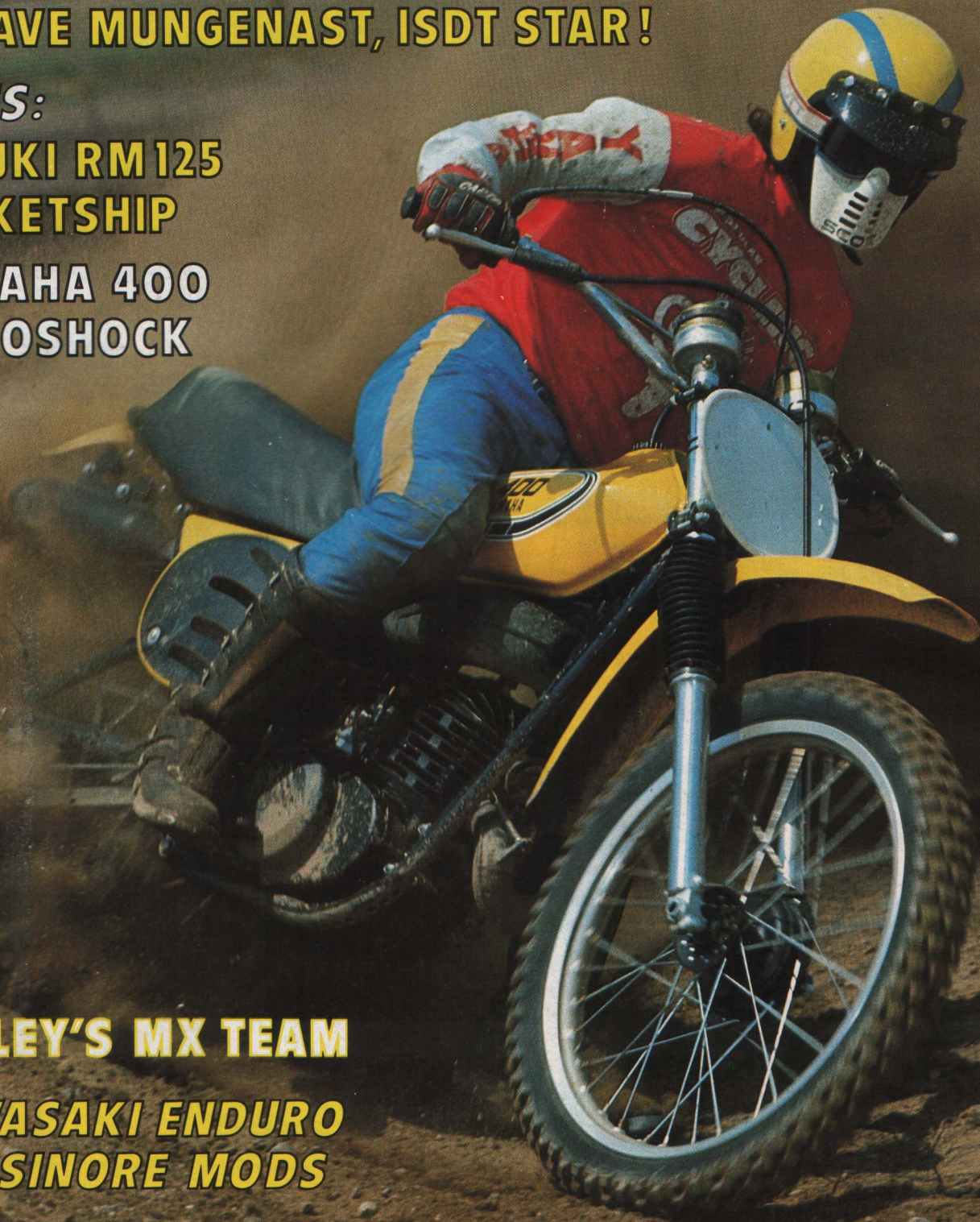
TESTS:

SUZUKI RM 125

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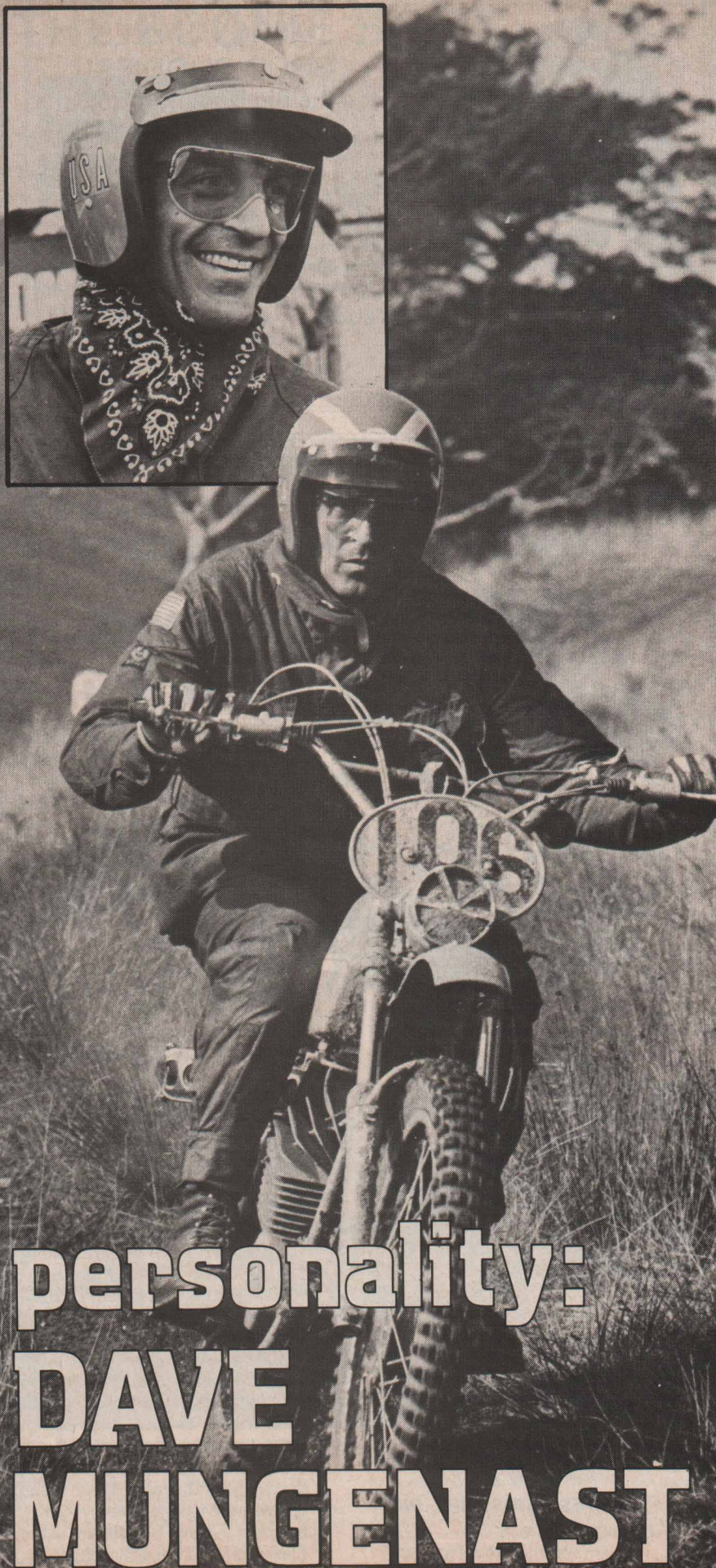
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How to Be 41, Funny and Fast

By Mary Witte

Dave Mungenast was once a motorcycle mechanic with a geology degree, who everyone warned would never get anywhere with those motorcycles. After 25-plus years on "those motorcycles," Dave holds the American record for most consecutive appearances in International Six Days Trials. He's a veteran rider, an entrepreneur whose ventures dot the town of St. Louis and, as if that weren't enough, he wants to develop this 1700-acre motorcycle park he's had for five years and hasn't been able to get around to yet.

His peers call him Dirty Dave—and regard him as a true enthusiast who, over the years, has been involved in as many aspects of the sport as one rider could be, always working for its betterment.

Dave owns four car, cycle and equipment dealerships: St. Louis Toyota and Volvo Sales, Dirt Bike Headquarters (a Husky & Penton dealership) a few miles away and, down the street from that, St. Louis Cycle & Van Accessories. His St. Louis Honda Motorcycles and Autos just moved into a new plant.

Dave claims to dislike the paperwork, suit-and-tie stuff, says he views his thriving conglomerate as a big Monopoly game. Or, he asserts, it's really a front for a Harley Hat factory.

The clan of Dave and Barbara Mungenast includes sons Dave, Ray and Kurt and occupies, in the usual phrase, a "modest" home at Lake Montowese "away from it all." Dave says that his 41-year old frame is kept looking like a 20-year-old's by his wife's dedication to natural foods cooking, despite his obsession with desserts. He hopes she will soon begin work on a hair restorer.

Dave is considered a *tough* motorcyclist, a fiercely competitive rider with the grit to finish or know the reason why—that is, if he can't manage to win. Dave's record for most consecutive ISDT appearances by an American, nine, is one he hopes to boost to ten when he travels to Austria with his Rokon teammates. I asked Dave, who remembers what it was like before motocross, to relate some of his more memorable experiences and views of this sport that he has lived for 25-plus years. I began with the usual opener . . .

Q: How did you get your start in motorcycles?

A: In 1950 I was working in a gas station and went in halves on a 1941 Indian Chief for \$75 each. Neither

personality:
DAVE
MUNGENAST

of us had ever ridden before, I went to pick up the bike. I'm sure you have heard old timers talk about the dangers of gravel on the turns and wet streetcar tracks. Well, I encountered both—less than a half-mile from the point of purchase, and spent the rest of the day in St. Louis County Hospital recovering from my first spill and wondering how to explain this incident to my motorcycle partner and my parents. (Of course, I had failed to tell them of this trans-action.) Nothing much else happened that first day, but my career in motorcycling seems to have gone steadily downhill from there.

Q: What kind of racing did you do way back when?

A: Footraces from irate husbands and won; footraces from oversexed women and lost. My first national enduro was the 1965 Jackpine Two Day and I became "World Famous" after my class win. Yes, that's right: First in my class on a Honda S90! No one else in the class finished. Of course, neither did I since I broke my leg six miles from the finish of the first day. But, since no one else went any further . . . I won.

Q: Weren't you more famous as a marathon racer?

A: Well, being basically masochistic, I loved these idiotic events. Once a year a bunch of women, the Missouri Motorcycle Maids, held an event at Riverdale Speedway, a half-mile, worn-out TT track close to St. Louis. The idea was to see who could go the furthest in 24 hours. The rules called for a five-minute rest every two hours and then balls out the rest of the time. No repairs, and if you fell, you were disqualified. I won the 250 class in '63 riding a Honda 250, 12 hours of which were on a flat tire.

In 1964 the event became a National and I won overall—"Honda's First National Win." I sat out '65 with a broken leg (Jackpine) but in '66 I won overall again on a 305 Honda Scrambler.

Q: How far did you go in that race?

A: I rode approximately 1800 laps in 24 hours. I didn't get dizzy, but I did get diarrhea once. Diet pills and Metrecal were the menu of the day.

Which reminds me, I suffered from a recurrence of this same affliction at the 1973 ISDT. I slid into the check, threw down my trusty Triumph and ran into the woods. I'm sure my pit crew thought I was deserting and was relieved to see me come back out again and resume the race.

That same event, my other fear became a reality: I slid out somehow,

became entangled and entrapped in the hulk of my bike, and lay under it on the trail crying for help until Arthur Browning of the English Trophy Team came by and extricated my body from the wreck . . . and on to a silver medal finally.

Q: What other proud moments have you had?

A: Besides my two ISDT Gold Medals from Poland in 1967 and The Isle of Man in 1971, my next two proudest moments would be the Gold Medal I won at the

very good friends since you met at your first Six Days. What happened that year?

A: In August of '67 I got a phone call from Leroy Winters, "Hillybilly" as the West Germans called him, asking me if I would like to ride a Husqvarna in the ISDT. Not wishing to appear stupid or impolite, I said yes, hung up the phone, and rushed to the Motorcycle Encyclopedia and looked up "Husqvarna" first, then "ISDT." Then I decided I had made a terrible mistake. Husqvarna = a Swedish



Riding for the local Rokon team now, Mungenast says that the firm is way ahead of the competition.

Two-Day Berkshire in 1970, as it was one of only ten and I rode a Penton 125; next was the '72 Berkshire Three-Day when I won another Gold on a stock Honda XL250, one of eleven Golds awarded that year.

Q: Do you have any heroes?

A: My hero is in alphabetical order: Malcolm Schmidt. I like his big ears for hearing and his big grin and strong teeth. I bet he's good at eating corn-on-the-cob *fast*. I hope I grow up to be just like him when I get big, like him.

Q: You and Malcolm Smith have been

Motocross Motorcycle; ISDT = Six Day Motorcycle Endurance Race. The two are not compatible, I thought! But, to make a long, boring story short, on this trip I met Edison Dye (the man responsible for motocross and Husqvarna in the U.S.—good guy or bad?? A little of each!) and John Penton (a great man, good friend, and one-time sponsor) and then, last but not least, Bud Ekins, the all time great ISDT rider and a real character. 1967 was his last ISDT and my first. Oh yeah, there was this kid Malcolm Smith. My good friend and competitor Leroy and I had quite an experience: First time to Europe, first time I sat on a Husky, first time to



In 1967, riding a Husky in Poland, Dave received one of the first Gold Medals in ISDT competition. Dave has been to nine consecutive ISDT events, an American record.

ISDT, first Gold, then first OCTOBERFEST!!

Q: Can you tell us more reasons why Bud Ekins is considered such a colorful character?

A: I could but you might not be able to print it. Bud was "colorful" because he was the only guy I know who could go six days and six nights. And all without ever taking a bath. My hero.

Q: The ISDT must be your favorite event, then.

A: It becomes a way of life after a few years. Your calendar revolves around it: Is it before or after Six Days, etc. What bike will I ride this time? etc.

The International competition makes you stretch, too. I have always loved long distance events (the 24 Hour Marathon, the Jackpine) so the ISDT is the ultimate. My pet peeve is to drive two hours, wait two hours, and ride 20 minutes in an event.

Q: What injuries have you had?

A: Me and Evel and Malcolm have kept the AMA in business—the American Medical Association, that is. I have broken an arm, hand, leg, shoulder, hip, foot, ribs, tootsies, pinkies and freebies. But not all at once and not necessarily in that order, so I consider myself fortunate.

Q: What do you think of the AMA?

A: Until someone comes along with a magic potion that will make motorcyclists become joiners and we increase the membership of the AMA to at least 500,000, we will not have the clout we need. I believe the quality of the personnel has improved immensely in the last few years. Men like Al Eames, Mike DiPrete, Gene Wirham are doing a great job and have something that the AMA has lacked for years—*credibility*. Most members still belong because they have to ride in events. A selling job is needed by people like Malcolm, heroes who have that "credibility", to sell the motorcycling public on the AMA.

Q: But Malcolm has a business to run

himself . . .

A: Yeah, so do I, and I know how people bug him for everything.

Q: Getting back to the ISDT, how's your Rokon?

A: How's your freebies? Getting a little personal, aren't you? I started riding a Rokon in '74 and I believe it has become a very competitive bike in three short years. The automatic is the only way to go and eventually every brand will have it, so Rokon will have a valuable three-year head-start. The people at Rokon have been as devoted in their effort as any group I have associated with in the past ten years. Also, I must mention Marty Ray, superlatives can't convey my thoughts and feelings on this guy. Dedicated, helpful, always pleasant—just ask anyone on the qualifier treadmill—Burlson, Schmidt, anyone—he's the *main man* in support.

Q: Your two sons, David and Ray, are going to start competing soon. Does that scare you or do you have any advice for fathers and sons?

A: Most parents push too hard. Many are trying to live through their children. Let them develop at their own paces . . . with guidance. Let them buy their own equipment; they'll take better care of it. (My own philosophy.) I tried to retard the riding development of my two oldest sons by making them ride mini bikes until they were sixteen. But when they both started passing me on the minis, it became so embarrassing I let them buy two new Huskies from me (at slightly over retail). After all, if you can't take advantage of your friends and family, what good are they?

Q: Do you have any training advice?

A: Eat the right thing!! Actually, I follow a modified Rolf Tibblin-Bud Ekins training program: I run one mile and drink a fifth. I really do have an exercise program that I try to follow: Twice a week I run two miles, exercise 35-40 minutes and run a half-mile back to my store where the oxygen and ambulance are waiting. My diet includes Ted Drew malts (found only in St. Louis—eat your heart out), pizza, Mexican food, and sometimes Chinese food for *short* events . . . you know it doesn't stay with you long. And vitamins, A,B,C,D, . . . and I.o.d. on E.

Q: What really *has* made you a success both in riding and in business?

A: Don't Quit!!! Tenacity. NEVER GIVE UP!!! I come from a family of "Workaholics." My dad retired at the

age of 80 for six weeks and couldn't take it, so now he's back to work five days a week. My dear brother Carl is a worker who started out at the bottom with Sears & Roebuck and is a big executive now with them. It's in the blood. Nine years ago my bookkeeper then told me to declare bankruptcy. I'm still here—he's gone. And 1967 was a disastrous year in the motorcycle business. But you just don't quit. I

hunters) to give them a reason to keep their motorcycles—social, economic, or just plain fun. We all cater to the dirt riders although most of our revenue is from the street rider. For years this has bothered me, but I haven't been able to come up with a solution. Of course, neither has the AMA. If I come up with one first, maybe I'll share it with them.

food and beer at Mike's Sky Ranch.

If I lived in an area where there was more activity in off-road auto racing, I'd give it a try. But my dream right now is to get my four stores running smoothly so that I can spend some time developing a 1700 acre motorcycle park that I have owned for five years. It's located 70 miles from St. Louis and it has suffered due to a lack of attention on my part. I want it to be a place for



Dave Mungenast and John Penton attempt the most dangerous aspect of the ISDT—eating some of the local food.

have never been an exceptionally fast rider, talker, etc., but I have taken advantage of the one thing I do have: "sticktoitiveness." I think that if I am considered successful in business or riding, it is due to this trait more than anything else.

In business, I am the only original owner left of the nine original Honda agencies in the St. Louis area. All the others have changed hands in the past 11 years. I'm also the only original owner of a Toyota store in the area as they have all changed hands too in the past 10 years. I will also be the first American to ride 10 consecutive Six Days!! (Eat your heart out, Smith!)

Q: What's in motorcycling's future?

A: Higher prices!! Land closure is a serious problem that we are just beginning to see in our area—hence the importance of developing places to ride now. *No Land, No Trail Bikes*. Also, there will be developed more fun things for the street riders so they stay in motorcycling longer than the average three years. We need to get them involved (like the N.R.A. does with

Q: Waxing philosophical for a moment, what kind of racing would you like to have done that you didn't?

A: Chasing you around my desk faster and catching you! Ha Ha. Off-Road Auto Racing: I'd love to ride Baja again. Someday I'll return (just like

people to enjoy the bikes I've sold them.

Q: Is that how you'd like to be remembered?

A: Yep, "Honest Dave" the used bike dealer! Honestly though, I'd like to be



Being a motorcycle racer doesn't mean that you can't have outside interests. The St. Louis Honda Motorcycle and Auto Shop helps to pay the racing expenses.

MacArthur). My first experience with that desert was with Gene Cannady on a pre-ride. That's an adventure I'll remember. 1400 miles in a little over two days. We ran out of gas, slept on the highway to keep warm (but so did the tarantulas) and had much good

remembered for supporting the sport that has done so much for me.

Q: Is it true what they say about your sense of humor?

A: Heavens, no!

