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## Pedal what you preach

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Paul Carpenter returns to his Batavia home from his job at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb on Wednesday night. (Bob Gerrard photo)

BATAVIA – As chairman of Northern Illinois University’s department of kinesiology and physical education, Paul Carpenter preaches the importance of exercise to his students.

Carpenter backs it up by practicing what he preaches. Every day, he hops on his 18-speed Klein Quantumbike and pedals his way to NIU, a 30-mile trek from his Batavia home.

When Carpenter pulls onto campus, however, he does not feel exhausted. Quite the opposite, in fact.

“I am energized and ready to start the day,” he said.

Originally from England, Carpenter and his wife, Melissa Hyams, have lived in Batavia since 2002.

The 48-year-old is a biking fanatic. In September, he won the Tejas 500, held near

Cleburne, Texas.

Battling temperatures that topped 100 degrees, Carpenter biked 500 miles in 30 hours and 57 minutes.

As Carpenter finished his 25th lap around the 20-mile loop, he wasn't prepared for the news he heard.

"A guy came up and asked me, 'How do you feel?' I told him that I felt pretty tired. He said, 'No, I mean how do you feel to have won?' I really had no idea. You had no idea what lap you were on."

A friend of his, Larry Ide, of Monmouth, came in second place, finishing in a time of 32 hours, 58 minutes. Participants had 48 hours to complete the race.

"We've gotten to race the same events for the last three years," Carpenter said. "I've pretty much finished second to him in everything, except for this race."

Hyams is not a bicyclist herself. But she understands her husband's interest in the sport.

"I can understand why people have this need to challenge themselves and choose these kind of goals," Hyams said.

Not to rest on his laurels, Carpenter today will participate in the Death Valley Double – a 200-mile race across Death Valley, Calif.

"I should be able to do it inside 12 hours," Carpenter said. "There's some pretty good hills. The highest point is at 4,000 feet."

And he's not ready to jump off his bicycle seat anytime soon.

"There are individuals at these events who are in their 70s," Carpenter said. "It's a huge physical challenge. It's like people who run marathons."