

Perkins Discovers Alton's West Seventh Street Is "Steepest Brick Street In World"

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - William Perkins is a proud Marine, but he has now become well-known for something else - the discovery that Alton's West Seventh Street is the steepest brick street in the world.

Perkins has diligently researched the subject for several years and he found that Canton Avenue in Pittsburgh, Penn., has the highest street gradient which is 31.37, but West Seventh in Alton has a gradient that makes it the steepest brick street of any throughout the world, according to his long-time research. Perkins worked with a Principia professor Dr. Marie Farson and her students to measure the steep incline.

“Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania brags that they have the steepest street in the country, which is Canton Avenue,” Perkins said. “The gradient on is 31.37%, West 7th is 22.7%.

“About one-third of Canton Avenue, though, is concrete and the rest of its cobblestone. West Seventh in Alton is brick - and from my research, that makes West Seventh the steepest brick street in the world.”

Perkins said he thought he would discover this fact once he began his investigation. He added that he also really appreciated the help of the Principia College professor and her students in the project.

“I had a pretty good hunch growing up it was the steepest brick street in the world,” he said. “I think the street in Pittsburgh has a National Historic Register sign on it. My love of history goes back to my family. My mom's family dates back to 1848 in Alton. I have always been fascinated by the good old days.”

Perkins lived part of his life on Dooley Street in Alton and is proud to be part of the Hunterstown area of Alton with property on Quincy Court.

Perkins developed a love of brick streets during his time in Alton. He pointed out that part of Third Street in Alton has brick underneath the pavement, which he wished had been protected.

“I can remember 50 years ago when Third Street was brick,” he said. “It has been blacktopped and stripped multiple times, but there is brick underneath.”

Perkins has been involved with VFW Post 1308 for many years and takes a lot of pride in his service to his country.

