

## Stepping out of Bounds in Cody -The last hurrah By Kevin Ross

As the final post-convention event, the Cody walking event offers a pleasant 5 and 10 km stroll through the residential, parks, and lake sections of town. The route is on a bluff area above the downtown area and is mostly flat with one small hill leading up to the lake area. There are beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and city along the trail that will entice you to stay and relish the regional experience. Of course, to help, the Comfort Inn in town is offering special rates to AVA volksmarchers, but sign up early to ensure a reservation.

We've all heard stories about Buffalo Bill Cody and seen movies and documentaries depicting his life. As a result, I've always had an interest in visiting Cody, WY. With all the other activities that life presents, a visit to Cody always seemed just beyond reach. I needed to find an opportunity to fit it into my schedule. How fitting it is that it's not only the final walking event of the 2017 AVA Biennial Convention, but that it is in a location that offers so many additional adventurous opportunities.

As you may suspect, the city of Cody was named after the famous frontiersman William "Buffalo Bill" Cody and still maintains its frontier identity. With a population of about 10,000, you would expect to find a small town with limited attractions and services. However, you will be surprised to know how many opportunities there are to create wonderful memories in Cody. The city has the charm of modern conveniences and services while still maintaining its historical persona. It is a pursued resort by many families for its available adventures – especially as one of the gateways to Yellowstone Park. And as great as that is, it's the walking event on June 11, 2017, that begins your visit to this wonderful city.

Even though you will want to partake in the magnificence of nearby Yellowstone Park, there are many attractions in Cody that you will want to visit. The most notable in Cody is the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, which contains a wealth of material related to his life. But, the Center of the West offers far more than just a history of Buffalo Bill. There is the Cody Firearms Museum area of the Center that houses the world's largest and most important assemblage of American arms, as well as European arms dating to the 16th century; the Whitney Gallery of Western Art wing that presents an outstanding collection of masterworks of the American West, including original paintings, sculptures and prints from the early 19th century to the present; and the Plains Indian Museum area, which ranks as one of the nation's finest Native American collections and presents a varied tapestry of Plains Indian art and artifacts displayed in realistic settings. The newest member of the Center of the West museum group, The Draper Museum of Natural History, is a state of the art natural history museum that explores human interaction with the natural world associated with the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. A visit to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is an absolutely essential attraction to visit in Cody. But, wait. There is more.

There are many more attractions that are very enjoyable in Cody. One is the every night Rodeo. If you haven't been to a rodeo in a while or ever, Cody is the place to experience the authenticity of its history and events. A visit to the Old Trail Town will provide you with an eclectic collection of historic buildings representing an old Wyoming town created with frontier structures dating from 1879 to 1900. The adjacent Trail Town Cemetery is the burial site of colorful hard-living characters of the Old West and is the final resting place of Jeremiah "Liver Eat'n" Johnson, whose life is famously depicted by Robert Redford in the 1972 Jeremiah Johnson movie. Even more exciting to the gun enthusiast is the Cody Firearms Experience where you can exercise your shooting skills while firing an 1861 Gatling gun. In fact, if you purchase a store logo T-Shirt, you can hang the shirt on the Gatling gun target and walk away with a T-Shirt that not only has large caliber bullet holes but generates memories of your Cody visit each time you wear it – not to mention the ice-breaking conversations with friends.

No visit to Cody would be complete without a stroll through the downtown area visiting the many restaurants, stores, and historic buildings. The Irma Hotel was built by Buffalo Bill and was named after his youngest daughter. He used to maintain two suites and an office in the hotel, which is worth a visit just to see the famous Cherrywood bar, a gift from Queen Victoria.

These are just a handful of the opportunities available to all who visit Cody. Hopefully, you will also take the time to stay and take a tour of Yellowstone Park. Whether you have visited Yellowstone before or not, each visit presents a unique experience. In fact, the trip to Yellowstone offers rewardable sightseeing - just six miles west of Cody, towards the east entrance to Yellowstone, is the Buffalo Bill Reservoir and the Buffalo Bill Dam Visitor Center, which offers additional insight into the ecosystem of the surrounding area.

So, with all of these Cody opportunities available, you probably couldn't imagine that it would start with a wonderful walk and that the final event of the 2017 AVA Biennial Convention could so immeasurably enhance the memories you have experienced to that point during the Convention. Believe it .... because Cody is beyond Convention-al.