

## TRAVEL

# Prescott offers cool break during Cowboy Poets gathering

By Pat Woods

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On a 110-degree July day, my husband, Rob, suggested we attend the annual Cowboy Poets gathering in Prescott the first weekend in August. "Let's go!" I said, "It'll be at least 10 degrees cooler there, and we haven't been to Prescott since 2001."

Five days later, we drove to the 26th annual Cowboy Poets gathering at the Yavapai College campus. Fifty performers recited poetry (some original) describing — often humorously — the joys and tribulations of ranching life, herding cattle, horseback adventures and coping with critters. Each had his or her own unique delivery style.

Western music was interspersed with cowboy poetry. Soloists and musical groups sang self-composed or classic songs and/or strummed instruments in nine campus venues. Daytime performances were free to the public — donations requested. Three well-known poets gave solo evening performances — admission charged.

Many of the performers lived or worked on ranches; others had another connection to ranching, cattle, horses or Western life. Some performers are retired; others toil at regular day jobs and share their poetry and music evenings and weekends. As Sam Deleeuw from Roy, Utah said, "When I retired from my regular job, I had no annual or sick leave left. I used it all doing what I love best!"

Poetry and music themes range from experiences with cattle, horses, ropes, pickup trucks, storms, aging, plus spousal and family relationships. Humor is generously laced throughout. The closing session on Saturday afternoon was a tribute to veterans.

We left the event with a better understanding of ranching life and keen respect and appreciation for the sacrifices, trials and tribulations ranchers make to provide the juicy steaks and hamburgers we Americans love.

**Details:** <http://www.azcowboypoets.org/>

## Phippen Museum of Western Art

Set on a dramatic hillside on Highway 89, seven miles



Sam Deleeuw recites during the annual Cowboy Poets gathering in Prescott. (Pat Woods)

north of Courthouse square, the museum displays the art and heritage of the American West. Named for George Phippen, an acclaimed Western artist and founding president of the Cowboy Artists of America, the attractive museum displays permanent and changing collections of high-quality paintings, sculptures, photos, Western artifacts and a working chuckwagon.

If you go, take time to step out on the deck for dramatic views of Granite Dells. While driving to and from Phippen Museum, we enjoyed the scenery at Watson Lake and the Granite Dells area.

**Details:** [www.phippenartmuseum.org](http://www.phippenartmuseum.org)

## Sharlot Hall Museum

Named after the female historian and poet who dedicated her life to preserving Arizona's pioneer history, this is one of Prescott's must-see attractions.

Born in Kansas in 1870, Sharlot Hall traveled by covered wagon to the Arizona Territory in 1882. Largely self-educated but highly literate, Hall was appointed Territorial Historian in 1909 and traveled the rugged back country. She saw the need to preserve Arizona's past and collected Native American and territorial material.

The attractive museum campus includes a rose garden, gazebo, windmill and an 1885 iron turbine. Events include art and music festivals and the Frontier Christmas open house. During our Saturday "Living history" visit, docents in period costumes

demonstrated meal preparation over an outdoor fire, baking pies from scratch, butter churning and more.

A single admission fee covers entrance to nine buildings built around the site of the Territorial Governor's Mansion on a four-acre campus. The museum offers discounts to seniors, military and children. See [www.sharlot.org](http://www.sharlot.org) or call 928-445-3122.

## Whispering Pines B&B

We drove through downtown Prescott and followed Copper Basin Road as it climbed in elevation. When the pavement turned to gravel, we slowed to find Tree Tops Trail. We turned left into the B&B driveway and drove up the incline for 300 yards to the concrete upper driveway and parking area.

The charming Whispering Pines B&B has a million dollar view from 6,300 feet. As we inhaled the fresh pine-scented air, we immediately knew this upscale property is a nature and birders paradise.

Owners Gayle and Tim Graham warmly welcomed us. Gayle gave us a bowl of homemade chocolate treats while Tim helped with luggage. Tim came from a British family that owned a B&B, and he majored in hotel management. A Milwaukee native, Gayle retains her Midwest work ethic. Both retired from teaching positions in a Milwaukee area college.

Originally built as a private home for the Pendleton family of Pendleton Woolen Mills in Oregon, the Grahams bought



Sunrise is a spectacular sight at Whispering Pines B&B in Prescott. (Pat Woods)

the Lindel trilevel house in 2005 and converted to a four-room B&B.

A full wrap-around deck sports seating areas for bird watching, reading or relaxing. Potted flowers, bird feeders and tasteful Southwest outdoor decor enhance the gorgeous 3 1/2-acre property. Wood-chip walking trails invite exploration.

Exceptionally thoughtful hosts, the Grahams provide a guest refrigerator and microwave at the back entrance. High knotty pine ceilings with open beams and huge dramatic windows let nature in.

The large upstairs lounge area is well stocked with books, Arizona Highways magazines and tourist literature. A leather sofa, large TV and multiple seating areas encourage games, reading or computing. Binoculars enable guests to watch the hummingbird feeder just a few feet away. Rob counted 11 birds on the same feeder.

I used the complimentary WiFi on my laptop computer and iPad. The quiet ambience, comfy surroundings and magnificent view provided a serene writing haven.

After sundown, the distant twinkling lights of Prescott and Prescott Valley provided a striking evening view, and big stars filled the dark sky. We heard no street noises in this mountaintop paradise. Coyote howls and yips reminded us we were in the



Docents in period costumes demonstrate meal preparation over an outdoor fire on Living History Saturday at Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott. (Pat Woods)

high desert. A katydid chorus lulled us to sleep.

In the early morning, a glorious sunrise painted the sky. Gayle rose early to prepare coffee, followed by a sumptuous breakfast with assorted fresh fruit, freshly baked muffins, yogurt, cereal, plus beautifully presented hot entrees. The memorable breakfasts reminded me of cruise ship vacations. This slice of paradise is good for the soul!

See [www.whisperingpines-](http://www.whisperingpines-)

[bb-az.com](http://bb-az.com) or call 928-443-1429.

A friendly community of 40,308, Prescott residents, businesses and churches graciously welcome visitors and happily provide information. To learn more about festivals, special events, attractions, outdoor recreation, lodging and eateries, visit [www.visit-prescott.com](http://www.visit-prescott.com) or call 928-445-2000.

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