
In Memoriam: Wesley M. Farmer (13 October 1933-4 July 2025)

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Wes Farmer was a kind and gentle soul. I knew him for many decades and always appreciated how he meandered through life's beauties at his own pace. Wes had a special gift: he could hear music and see colors that others could not. That helped make him an artist, scientist, and caring human being. As one of the many fortunate people who knew him put it, "He was a talented artist, a skilled marine biologist, an unsung soldier of malacology, and a damned nice guy. The world is less without a person like him. I remember him as soft-spoken, who along with Carole and Jules Hertz graciously welcomed me to the shell club and always carried on fascinating conversations about a variety of subjects. I'm sorry to hear of his passing" (Robert Dees, personal communication, 11 August 2025).

Dr. Wesley Farmer (Figures 1-14, 33) was born 13 October 1933 in San Diego, California. His parents were Ray and Dorothy Farmer. He had two brothers, Robert and Donald. From 1937-1944 the family lived above the San Diego Bindery, owned by his father, at 127 F Street. In June 1949 he graduated from the eighth grade at Brown Military Academy. During these early years, his grandfather and uncle introduced Wes to the wonders of sea life. While a junior in high school, he participated as a Junior Scientist on a Scripps Institution of Oceanography cruise to Bahía Vizcaino, under the direction of Dr. Kenneth S. Norris. He graduated from San Diego High School in 1953 and then earned a Bachelor's degree in zoology from San Diego State in 1957.

It was during this time that Wes became interested in plastic and clay modeling. "While a student at Roosevelt Junior High, I discovered that some of those in the shop class were working with plexiglass laminations, using color adhesive between the layers and shaping it into heart pendants. It wasn't long before I got the idea of embedding a small seahorse and salamander in Bio Plastic, a material produced by Wards Natural Science Establishment, Inc. in Rochester, New York. A correspondence course at the Southwestern School of Taxidermy resulted in a few other creations, such as a bluegill fish mount, a barn owl mount, and prepared insects" (Farmer, 1988). Thus began his life-long joining of science and art (Figures 15-21).

During the Korean War, Wes served in the U.S. Army and was a clinical and medical technologist at Fort Ord, California; Fort Chaffee, Arkansas; and Fort Bliss, Texas. Once his military service ended, he returned to San Diego, where he became the Curator of Exhibits at the San Diego Natural History Museum. It was then he began his Baja California meanderings and research on nudibranchs. He and coauthor Clinton Collier once wrote about their work together as follows: "During the past few years [we] ... have made many trips along both coasts of Baja California to observe and collect the opisthobranch fauna of the region. We have found areas in which the animals are likely to occur and in which we may find more of the unusual forms. More importantly, we are able to obtain accurate color descriptions and measurements from the living animals and are

not dependent on badly contacted specimens for descriptions. We have also made an effort to return living animals to San Diego so that they could be photographed. Such a procedure is of the utmost importance in the case of animals whose form and color are of such taxonomic significance. On extended trips, we took photographs in the field” (Collier and Farmer, 1964: 379). They were the pioneers in nudibranch studies on both coasts of the Baja California peninsula, being the first namers of species that they themselves had collected. *Armina convolvula* Lance, 1962 [= *Histiomena marginata* (Mörch, 1859)] was named by James R. Lance based on specimens collected by Faye and Alan Wolfson in the Gulf of California.

In the mid 1960s, Wes and Michaelene Pasternacki married; they moved to Tempe, Arizona, where after entering Arizona State University he pursued a master’s degree in zoology, completed in 1970. While he and Michaelene raised their two children, Audrey and Deanna, in the Tempe region, Wes worked in the histology lab of Maricopa County General Hospital in Phoenix. Substituting for her husband, Michaelene served (1972) as the Chairman [sic] of the Opisthobranch Symposium at the 5th Annual Meeting of the Western Society of Malacologists in Redlands. In 1978, he named several nembrothine slugs from the Gulf of California and the Galapagos Islands, both bryozoan feeders and a nudibranch predator. Different from his 1960 publications, these descriptions were based on specimens other people (especially Ed Janss, Dave Mulliner, and Gale Sphon) had collected. Wes named twelve species and one genus (*Conualevia*) of nudibranchs during his career (see Figures 22-32).

Wes moved back to San Diego in 1981 to take care of his father; then in 1984 he moved to Santee. It was here he began his contributions to the San Diego Shell Club, including hosting several club parties at his Santee home. In 1987 he moved to his Ruffin Road condo in San Diego. Dr. Farmer was President of the SDSC in 1987 and 1998. For many years he served as the Club’s representative to the San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation. The Foundation’s room in Balboa Park was the site of the monthly SDSC meetings. For over 30 consecutive years, he offered the common room of his condo association for the club’s annual April auction.

The San Diego Shell Club initiated the Wes Farmer Award for Educational Excellence in August 2017 to honor its long-standing member, Dr. Wes Farmer. The award is presented annually at the West Coast Shell Show.

Friend, colleague and fellow SDSC Past President Larry Buck remembers Wes well. He wrote, “I recently received sad news of the passing of Wes Farmer. Oddly, the first thing that comes to mind was Wes expressing to me a goal of his was to reach the age of one hundred. For myself I thought sixty might be pushing it—too much fun!

“Upon reflection, Wes played a supportive role in San Diego Shell Club history. I met Wes in the 1980s. When I became Club President. I soon learned that Wes Farmer was a person to rely on—for his help, his knowledge, and for his interesting stories. And if the Club needed help, Wes would always raise his hand to volunteer. Many Club auctions took place at the clubhouse where Wes lived. A lot of Club history there. I've spent considerable time going through the Club archives, and I noticed the name Wes Farmer appearing all the way back into the 1960s —wow!

“Once, on a Club trip to Puerto Escondido in Baja California Sur, I recall a pleasant surprise. There came Wes, driving down the path to our campsite in his little truck. Yeah, Wes! He wasn't about to be left out. And it turned out to be quite a gathering. Wes easily fit himself into all the fun. We all had a blast.

“Wes Farmer was a quiet, gentle, descent man. He will be sorely missed by all of us who knew him. He won't be forgotten. I think I'll go have a beer in his honor. Cheers, Wes! Rest in peace, Wes Farmer” (Larry Buck personal communication, 2 August 2025).

Club member Lisa Lindahl remembers meeting Wes 12 years ago when we were using his clubhouse for our spring auctions: “He was a great guy and a gentleman” (Lisa Lindahl, personal communication 11 August 2025).

Dr. Farmer was a frequent guest for field classes to the Vermilion Sea Field Station in Bahía de los Ángeles (Figure 34) from the 1970's into the 1990's. Former director Lane McDonald (personal communication 12 August 2025) wrote that he was a great friend, always happy to share his expert knowledge of the intertidal and identify the most difficult to identify invertebrates. Wes was always focused on students' needs and success. Any time he found a nudibranch, “it was definitely cause for a party. A great friend, and most unselfish person in the world, always glad to share. He was such a good man, and I'm so sad that he's no longer with us, but we will always remember him.” While herself a student at the Field Station, Lane's daughter Meghann McDonald remembers Wes always stopping to chat and answer questions and support her curiosity.

From 1990 to 2012, Wes volunteered as a docent at the Torrey Pines State Reserve, guiding tours, researching the geology, fossils, marine life, and landscape, interacting with visitors and the other docents, writing articles for the *Torreyana* (a publication of the Reserve) and presenting talks on his research.

“Wes Farmer was a renaissance man in all respects: teacher/educator, Ph.D. in oceanography specializing in nudibranchs, sculptor, painter, photographer, desert-lover, longtime docent at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve with over 7,000 volunteer hours, my mentor at the Reserve, gardener, well-read, erudite, and a true friend. Wes and I spent hundreds of hours pulling invasive species out of the reserve, leading nature walks and the children's program for hundreds of students and preserving the rarest pine trees in North America, the Torrey Pines. We laughed, worked, and played together. He was a good man and will be missed. Godspeed, Wes!” (Joe Meyer, fellow docent, personal communication 24 July 2025).

In November 2019, Wes moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, for health reasons and to be near his daughter Deanna. In April 2024 he had an exhibit of his nudibranch models and drawings at the Las Vegas Natural History Museum. He continued his passion for joining science and art.

Wes Farmer died in Las Vegas on 4 July 2025, 91 years old. We extend our deepest sympathy to his daughters Deanna and Audrey, and grandchildren Emily and Alex.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful for the kind, caring, and generous help given to me by Wes' daughters, Audrey and Deanna. Dr. Ángel Valdés, Joe Meyer, Larry Buck, Lisa Lindahl, Lane McDonald, and Meghann McDonald provided illustrations and/or text. Robert Dees skillfully reviewed the manuscript.

NOTE: A list of Dr. Farmer's publications is provided as Supplementary Material on the SDSC website: <https://www.thesandiegoshellclub.com/reference-resources.html>



Figures 1-5. 1. Michaelene and Wes Farmer with daughters Deanna (the younger) and Audrey, Tempe, 1970s. Photo courtesy daughter Deanna (DW) and Audrey (AH); 2. Wes and his father, early 1980s. Photo courtesy DW and AH; 3. Wes and Larry Buck, SDSC Party, September 1987. Photo by David Mulliner; 4. Wes at the annual SDSC auction, April 1989. Photo by David Mulliner; 5. Wes with grandchildren Alex and Emily, La Jolla tide pools, ca. 2005. Photo courtesy DW and AH.

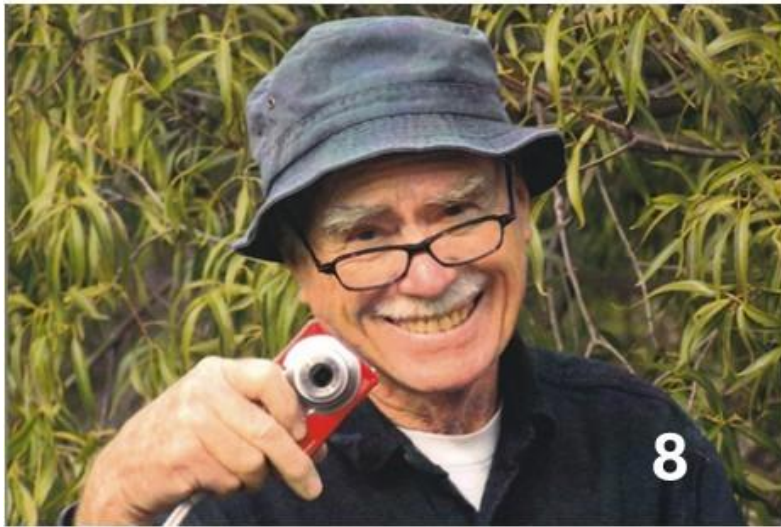


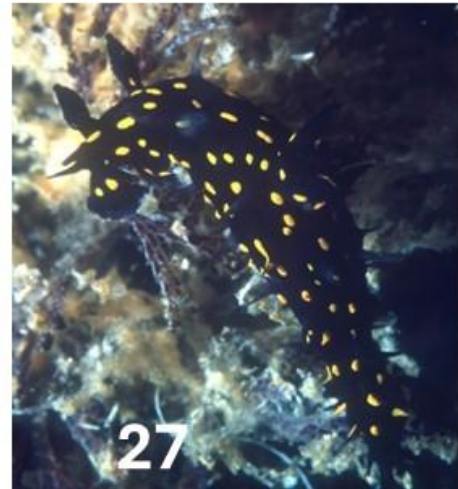
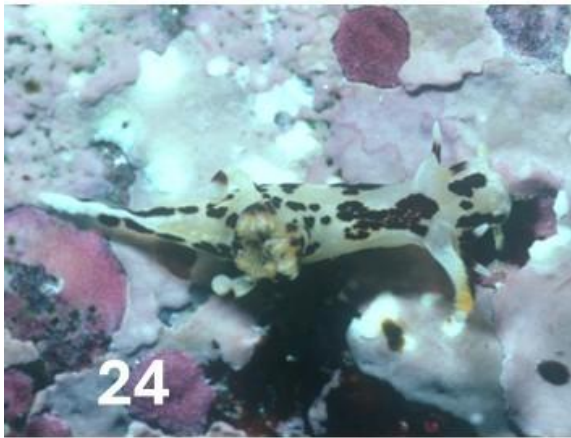
Figure 6-12. 6. SCUM meeting, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, January 2007; Wes is front row, far left. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 7. Wes painting Isla Coronado from Cuevitas, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, 9 July 2008, shaded from the summer sun. Photo by Hans Bertsch. (See Figure 18.); 8. Smiling Wes with camera, 2010s. Courtesy of Wes Farmer; 9. Wes with Carole and Jules Hertz, SCUM, January 2014. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 10. Red-tailed hawk and Wes, Hawk Watch, in Ramona at the Begent Ranch, ca. 2015. Photo courtesy of Joe Meyer; 11. Wes with art work at the Off Track Gallery, Encinitas, 7 December 2016. Photo courtesy DW and AH; 12. Daughter Deanna with Wes at his Las Vegas Natural History Museum exhibit, 10 April 2024. Photo courtesy DW.



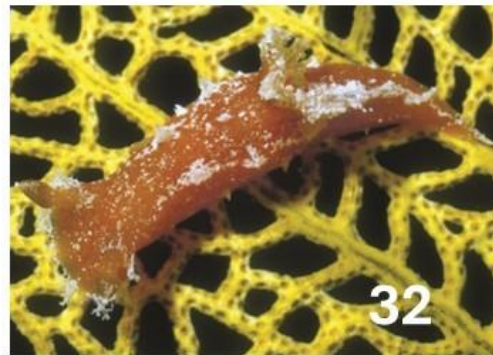
Figures 13-14. 13. Wes with children and grandchildren, left to right: Audrey, Alex, Deanna, Wes, and Emily, Las Vegas, 2023. Photo courtesy of AH; 14. Wes with his exhibit of nudibranch models, Las Vegas Natural History Museum, 10 April 2024. Photo courtesy DW.



Figures 15-21. 15. Nudibranch models made by Wes Farmer, left to right: *Felimida baumanni*, *F. norrisi*, and *F. marislae*. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 16. Painting of *Felimida macfarlandi*, oil on canvas, by Wes, 1967. Scanned by Hans Bertsch; 17. Painting of *Tyrinna evelinae*, oil on canvas, by Wes, 1967. Scanned by Hans Bertsch; 18. Painting of Isla Coronado, Bahía de los Ángeles, by Wes, 9 July 2008. (See Figure 7.); 19. Drawing made at Torrey Pines State Nature Reserve by Wes; 20. Painting of flatworms on the wall of the Vermilion Sea Station, by Wes, 1991. Photo courtesy of Meghann McDonald; 21. Painting of a row of nudibranchs on the wall of the Vermilion Sea Station, by a student, inspired by Wes Farmer. Photo courtesy of Meghann McDonald.



Figures 22-27. 22. * *Chromodoris banksi* Farmer, 1963 [Synonym = *Chromolaichma dalli* (Bergh, 1879)]. NE of Punta Eugenia, Baja California Sur, intertidal, 16 August 1998, 34 mm in length. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 23. *Felimida norrisi* (Farmer, 1963) [Originally *Chromodoris norrisi*]. North end of reef at Hotel Las Arenas, east of La Paz, Baja California Sur, 23 feet deep, 4 April 1985, 12 mm long. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 24. *Ancula lentiginosa* Farmer in Farmer & Sloan, 1964. Punta la Gringa, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, subtidal, 21 March 1996, 9 mm in length. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 25. *Conualevia marcusii* Collier & Farmer, 1964. Punta Calerita, near Bahía Tecolote, north of La Paz, Baja California Sur, intertidal, 12 March 1996, 20 mm long. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 26. *Conualevia alba* Collier & Farmer, 1964. Bahía Tortugas, Baja California Sur, intertidal, 29 June 1984, 8 mm in length. Photo by Hans Bertsch. [* = synonym]



Figures 28-32. 27. *Polycera alabe* Collier & Farmer, 1964. Punta la Gringa, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, 15 feet deep, 27 May 1984, 18 mm in length. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 28. *Cerberilla pungoarena* Collier & Farmer, 1964. Southern California, subtidal, 7 April 2018. Photo by Craig Hoover; 29. *Tambja abdere* Farmer, 1978 [Synonym = *Tambja fusca* Farmer 1978. Southeast Isla Ventana, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, 48 feet deep, 30 June 1996, 71 and 75 mm long. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 30. *Tyrannodoris tigris* (Farmer, 1978) [Originally *Roboastra tigris*]. Sunken reef between Islas Ventana and Cabeza de Caballo, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, 12 feet deep, 2 July 1997, 20 cm in length. Photo by Hans Bertsch; 31. *Plocamopherus lucayensis* Hamann & Farmer, 1988. Bell Channel Canal, 0.5 mile east of the Bell Channel entrance, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, on the underside of floating boat docks, June 1984, 40 mm in length. Photo by Jack Worsfold, courtesy of Ángel Valdés. 32. *Plocamopherus pilatectus* Hamann & Farmer, 1988. Princess Margaret Beach, Bequia, Grenadines of St. Vincent, Caribbean, at night, 21 m deep, March 1987, 28 mm long. Feeding on the bryozoan *Zoobotryon verticillatum* (Delle Chiaje, 1822). Photo by Jeff Hamann, courtesy of Ángel Valdés. [* = synonym]



Figure 33-34. 33. John Sloan (see Farmer & Sloan, 1964), Wes Farmer, Chris Parrish, and Reid Moran (botanist, San Diego Natural History Museum) on a research expedition at Mission San Borja, Baja California, early 1960s. Photo from the Archives of the San Diego Natural History Museum, courtesy of Ariel Hammond, Director of the museum's Research Library and Archives; 34. Vermilion Sea Field Station, Bahía de los Ángeles, Baja California, early 1960s. Photo from the Archives of the San Diego Natural History Museum, courtesy of Ariel Hammond, Director of the museum's Research Library and Archives.

San Diego Shell Club September Party

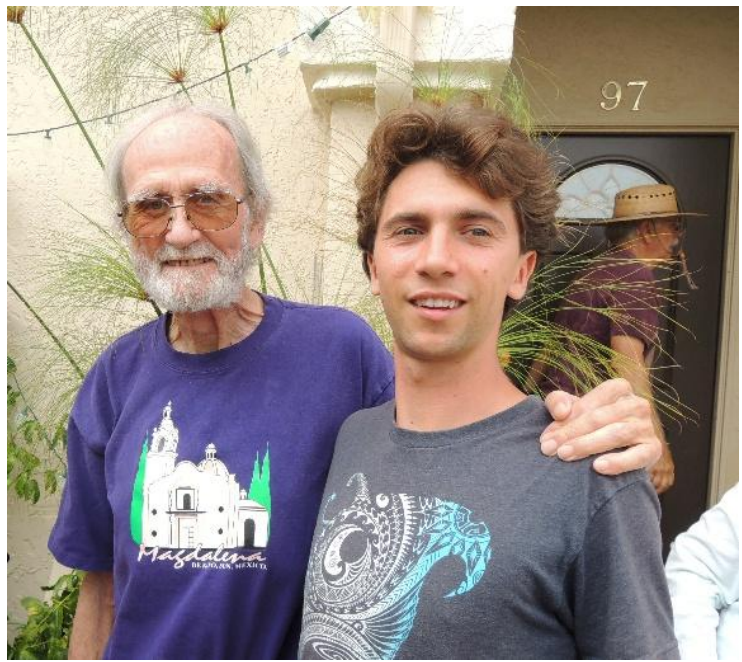
By David B. Waller



This year one of our newest members offered to host the SDSC September Party and what a wonderful venue. Both Nile and Konstantin El Wardani welcomed our members to their beautiful home and took guests on a tour of their many collections. While our hosts have been collectors for many years, they only recently began expanding their beautiful shell collection after attending one of our annual auctions.

The food provided by our hosts and our other members were spectacular. The main courses varied from lasagna to sushi. A culinary delight.





The September party is different from our Club's other events that are usually focused on selling and exchanging shells to enhance and grow our collections. This event was created to build community among our members and to exchange thoughts, ideas, and stories. While the number of individuals attending varies, the time we all spend together is priceless. The history and recollections of those who have been collecting for decades are simply fascinating.

As anticipated, the event was a wonderful success. Our terrific hosts, good food, great company and excellent stories of past shell collecting trips all over the world made for a memorable event. If you missed it, you need not worry. There will be a 2026 September party so you will have another opportunity. I look forward to seeing you there and a big "THANK YOU" to Nile and Konstantin for hosting this event.

SDSC Member's Auction

By David B. Waller

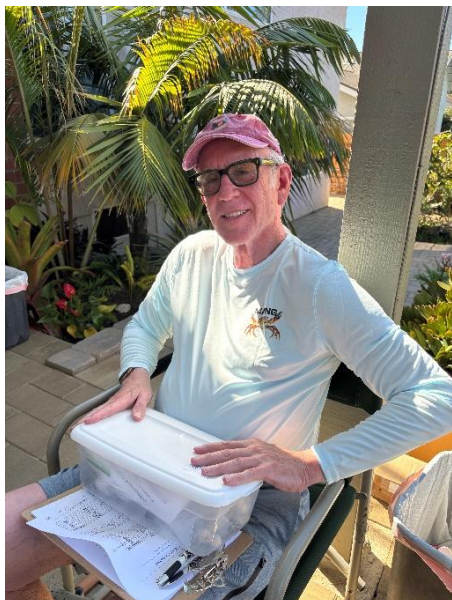
This years Member's Auction was absolutely fantastic. It was held at the home of Paul and Ann Tuskes in Clairmont. What a beautiful venue. There were six sellers, fifteen buyers, great pizza, and some fabulous shells for sale to lucky bidders. Some of these conchological wonders included: *Harpa queenslandic* (almost pure white), *Cancellaria cooperi*, *Perotrochus wareni*, *Notocypraea declivis*, and *Voluta ebraea* (unique markings).



A



B



C



D



E

F

Figure 1. Some of our members enjoying the event **A**-Chloe Kim and Nile El Wardani, **B**-Larry Buck, **C**-Andy Lazere, **D**-Konstantin El Wardani, **E**-Paul Tuskes and **F**-Donna and Chris Maciocek.

The sellers did well and the Club made a little extra after expenses. All in all everyone had a wonderful time. Special thanks to Ann and Paul for opening their home for the event. Also thanks to all who helped clean up after the auction was over. I look forward to seeing you next year.

ADDENDUM: Clark, R.N. (2025). Re-examination of the *Neptunea lyrata* (Gmelin, 1791) complex in the northeastern Pacific (Salish Sea to Gulf of Alaska), with description of three species. *Festivus* 57(3):184-189

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Introduction: In my paper Re-examination of the *Neptunea lyrata* (Gmelin, 1791) complex in the northeastern Pacific (Salish Sea to Gulf of Alaska), with description of three species. *Festivus* 57(3):184-189. On page 184, the type locality of *Neptunea grovesi* Clark, 2025, was inexplicably omitted. It is herein presented.

Type locality: North of Chirikof Island, Kodiak Island Borough, Gulf of Alaska (56°10.6 N, 155°37.6 W); trawled, 61 m. (NMFS 134-2005-1-97) (*leg.* R. N. Clark, 15 June, 2005).