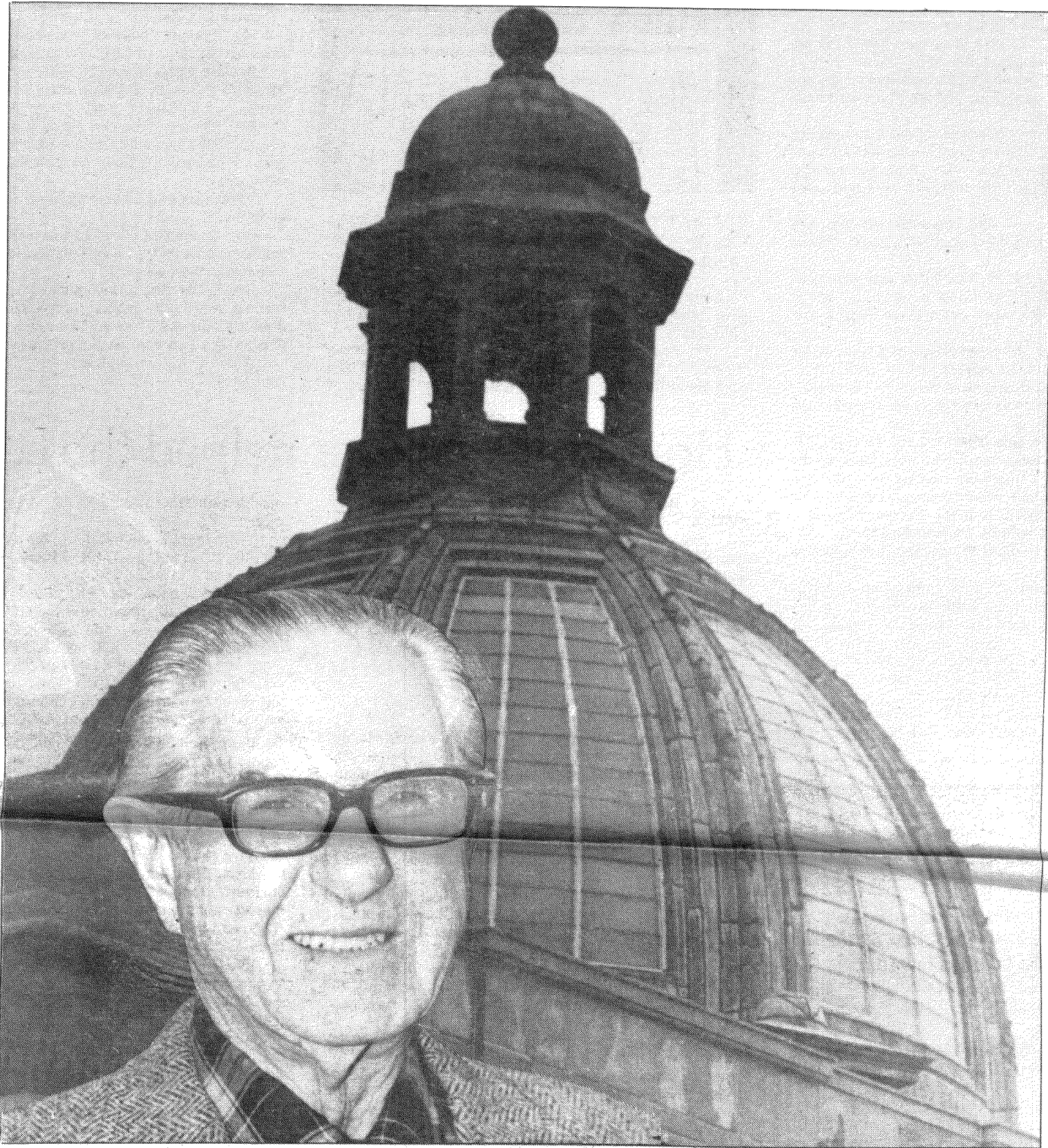


the Country Almanac



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Ray Spangler: Courthouse reflections

BY MARION SOFTKY

On his 80th birthday Ray Spangler, courthouse reporter for the Country Almanac, can look back on a lifetime dedicated to providing news and service to the people of San Mateo County.

For 32 years as reporter, editor and publisher of the Redwood City Tribune, he told the people of San Mateo County what was going on. He fought—and is still fighting—for the public's right to know and newsmen's right to report.

Through the paper and his daily column "Under the Courthouse Dome" he successfully campaigned for causes from cleaning up county government to controlling air pollution to raising money for the needy at Christmas.

Less successful, but more fun, was his campaign for a five cent cup of coffee.

Through all these years his purpose has been "to be a part of the community and to tell things just as they happen," he said in an interview in his Redwood City home. Always succinct, he added, "Sometimes that's a little brutal."

That career has been marked with ample recognition. Besides numerous personal awards, Mr. Spangler is proudest of two awards won by the Redwood City Tribune: one for its leadership in establishing controls over air pollution in the Bay Area, the other for general excellence.

In 1956 the paper won an Editorial Citation from the California News Publishers' Association for its nine year campaign which led to the formation of the Bay Area Air

Pollution Control District in 1955. Under constant pressure from the newspaper, the county board of supervisors and former Senator Richard Dolwig eventually pushed through the law which allowed the Bay Area to clean up its air.

"I wrote 56 columns on it over the years," Mr. Spangler remembers.

Then in 1969, the year Mr. Spangler retired, the Tribune won the association's prize for General Excellence. "That was a nice way to go out," he comments.

64 YEARS OF NEWSPAPERS

In 1916 Ray Spangler helped put out his first newspaper. As a high school freshman in South San Francisco, he and some classmates handwrote the paper

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