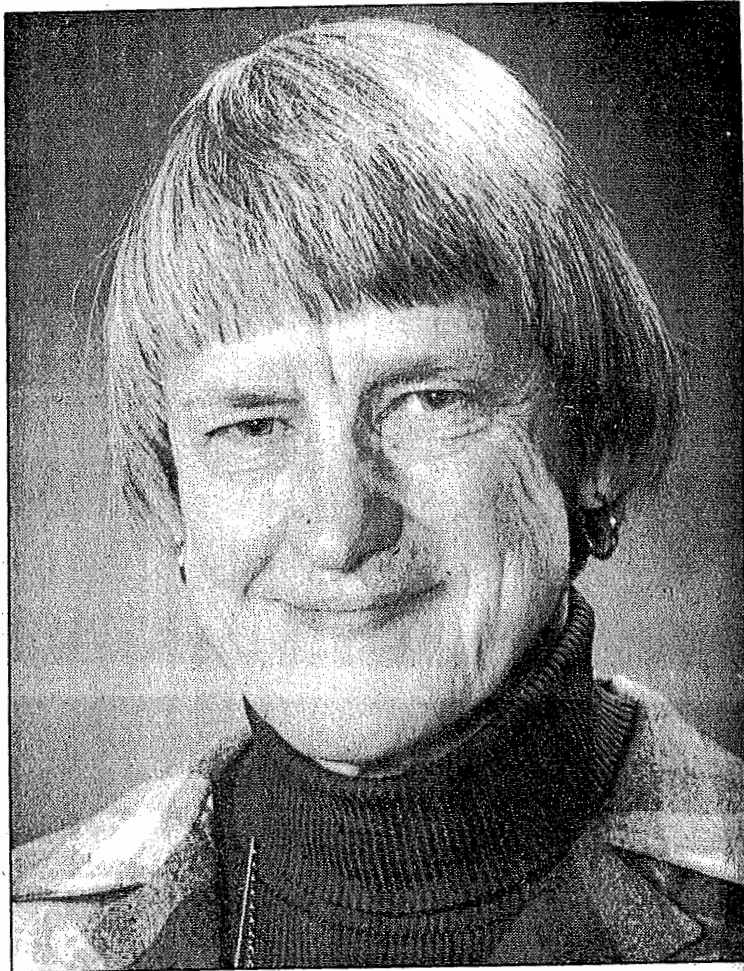


People

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Ruth Hine

— State Journal photo by L. Roger Turner

Ruth Hine

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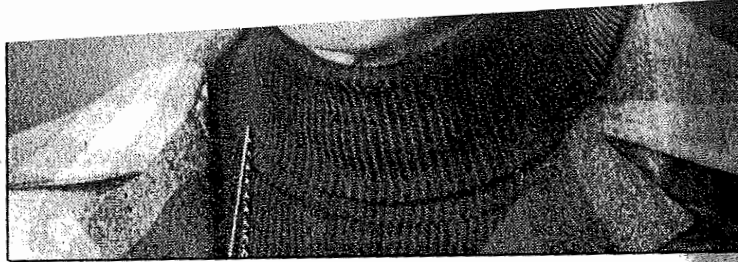
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In Ruth Hine's life there is no clear distinction between her religious faith and her vocation.

A naturalist and an editor for the Wisconsin Conservation Department, Miss Hine says, "ecology and creation fit together."

When one becomes aware of nature, "you begin to care," Miss Hine says. "You begin to love the earth and all that it stands for."

Miss Hine has been an editor for the Conservation Department since 1949.

In 1984, she began half-time duties with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. She helps the Lutheran church camps develop ecology and naturalist programs.

"I think religious stewardship is a process you build step by step," she says. "As you become aware of the outdoors, as you begin to experience God's creation, then taking care of it follows. By helping the camps develop first-step programs for campers, you start a process that leads, eventually, you hope, to a greater sense of reverence for all of God's creation."

As one talks with Miss Hine, her phrases start to sound similar to those used by the Rev. Harley Swiggum, author of the Bethel Bible Series, a two-year course of biblical study for laymen.

"I've been strongly influenced by the Bethel Series," Miss Hine says. "It's helped me understand my faith and when you understand your faith, you begin to understand yourself."

Miss Hine has been a member of Bethel Lutheran Church since 1959 and worked with its associate pastor, the Rev. Duane Hanson, to develop the Bethel Horizons church camp near Dodgeville.

"Bethel Horizons is really unique," she says. "It's a relatively wild, well-run place that is close enough to Madison to provide some unique activities."

Among the programs she said Bethel Horizons is most proud of is

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a summer program that brings dozens of underprivileged children to the camp at church expense.

Although her religious belief provides a center for Miss Hine's life, she wasn't always an active church member.

"I was brought up in the church, but I dropped out of it during college," she says. "I existed in that silly state for 15 years and then, for no reason that I recall I started shopping for a church again. I visited Bethel and it felt good. And then I fell with a 'plop' and the church has been a major part of my life since."

She is a Bethel Series teacher, has been a director of Bethel Horizons for nine years, and is a director of the Adult Christian Education Foundation, the parent organization of the Bethel Series.

She is also a member of the "First Friends" program of the Dane County Mental Health Association and belongs to the Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Society, Botanical Club, Soil Conservation Society of America, Environment Wisconsin and of Friends of the Arboretum.

A native of Ohio, Miss Hine is a 1944 graduate of Connecticut College. She earned her master of arts degree in 1947 and her doctorate in zoology and wildlife management in 1949, both from UW-Madison.

Despite her love of the outdoors, Miss Hine says she has never lived in the country.

"My family always lived in the city and I have, too," she says. "My home is on the edge of the Arboretum, so I experience the outdoors that way — but I also have the advantage of being close to the university, the Civic Center and the other city amenities."