



Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan



# Marching against the MILITARY



Rain dampened Nebraska roads but not the spirits of the eight people walking along them to Strategic Air Command in Bellevue. The walkers left the Unitarian Church at 63rd and A streets June 18 to trek through summer sun, heat and wind, about 55 miles to SAC. The trip, called "SAC Trek IV," culminated Saturday with a disarmament protest of about 30 demonstrators at SAC's west gate. The daily walks began around 10 or 11 a.m. and lasted until 4 or 5 p.m., depending on the distance between campsites. Lunch was a picnic under a shade tree at about noon. The walkers camped in Eagle; Grandpa's Woods, which is a campsite near Elmwood; Louisville and Plattsmouth before reaching Bellevue on Saturday afternoon. Rain kept the trekkers from camping in Louisville and walking Wednesday and Thursday, so they stayed in Lincoln and drove to Plattsmouth on Friday. Along the way, the walkers talked about money, music, relationships and when they would reach the next town. They waved to people in passing cars, who sometimes waved or honked back. A relief car carrying their camping gear stopped about every two miles

with water, sunscreen and a chance for a couple of trekkers to rest while they drove up the road for another rest stop. People joined or left the walkers daily because of illness, jobs or classes. This trek was much smaller than past trips, but size doesn't matter a great deal, according to Nell Eckersley, one of the trek's organizers. A smaller group is more cohesive, she said, and lets everyone get to know each other better. The biggest drawback to the trip was the unpleasant weather, Eckersley said. The cancellation of the Louisville camp-out hurt morale, she said, and the trip was "not as special" as past treks when the group spent the entire week camping. But she said she thought the trek was a success and that "some minds were changed" by the demonstration at SAC. One of the walkers, Camilla Eckersley, agreed that the rain bogged down the trek, but she said the trip "feels more like a march" with a larger group. She has helped plan SAC Trek for the past four years and belonged to Youth for Nuclear Freeze, which sponsored the trip the first three years. This year, UNL's Early Warning! and the Omaha group Youth for

Peace sponsored the event. The demonstrators ran into a snag Saturday when they found out they needed a permit to protest in Bellevue. Rather than risk arrest, they moved the demonstration to the SAC entrance on highway 75, beyond city limits and out of the police department's jurisdiction. Five people were arrested by military police for crossing over the line at the entrance. Being arrested was a "direct action" to show support for disarmament, Nell Eckersley said. She said she and the other four arrested were fingerprinted, photographed and given "ban and bar" letters, which prevent them from visiting a military base without permission for 90 days. The arrest will not appear on a police record, she said. Passing drivers gave demonstrators the "thumbs-up," or called them "communists" or "traitors." One driver, who was watching the protesters instead of the road, slammed into the back end of a stopped car. Overall, the protest created a better understanding of disarmament and anti-nuclear issues, Nell Eckersley said. "We're doing as much as we can," she said.

**Clockwise from center:**  
 Five demonstrators hold hands while hearing the penalty for crossing the white line at SAC.  
 Protestors display their signs to Highway 75 traffic in front of SAC.  
 Alex Thomas gives Michelle Allen a hug of encouragement before going up to the SAC entrance.  
 Military police wait in formation while the protesters explain their reasons for demonstrating.  
 Michelle Allen, a Bellevue East senior, burns a SAC flag outside the base.  
 Trekkers en route to Eagle stop for lunch Monday under a pine tree.  
 A gust of wind from a passing semi truck on highway 34 forces Emo Sybert to hold onto her hat.



Story and Photos by Michelle Paulman