



D2

Brother of 'Invention'

RICKY GERVAIS GETS CAUGHT IN THE ACT.



D9

Stone-cold groove

JOSS STONE, ON THE LAWN AT RIVERSIDE.



D5

A fresh approach

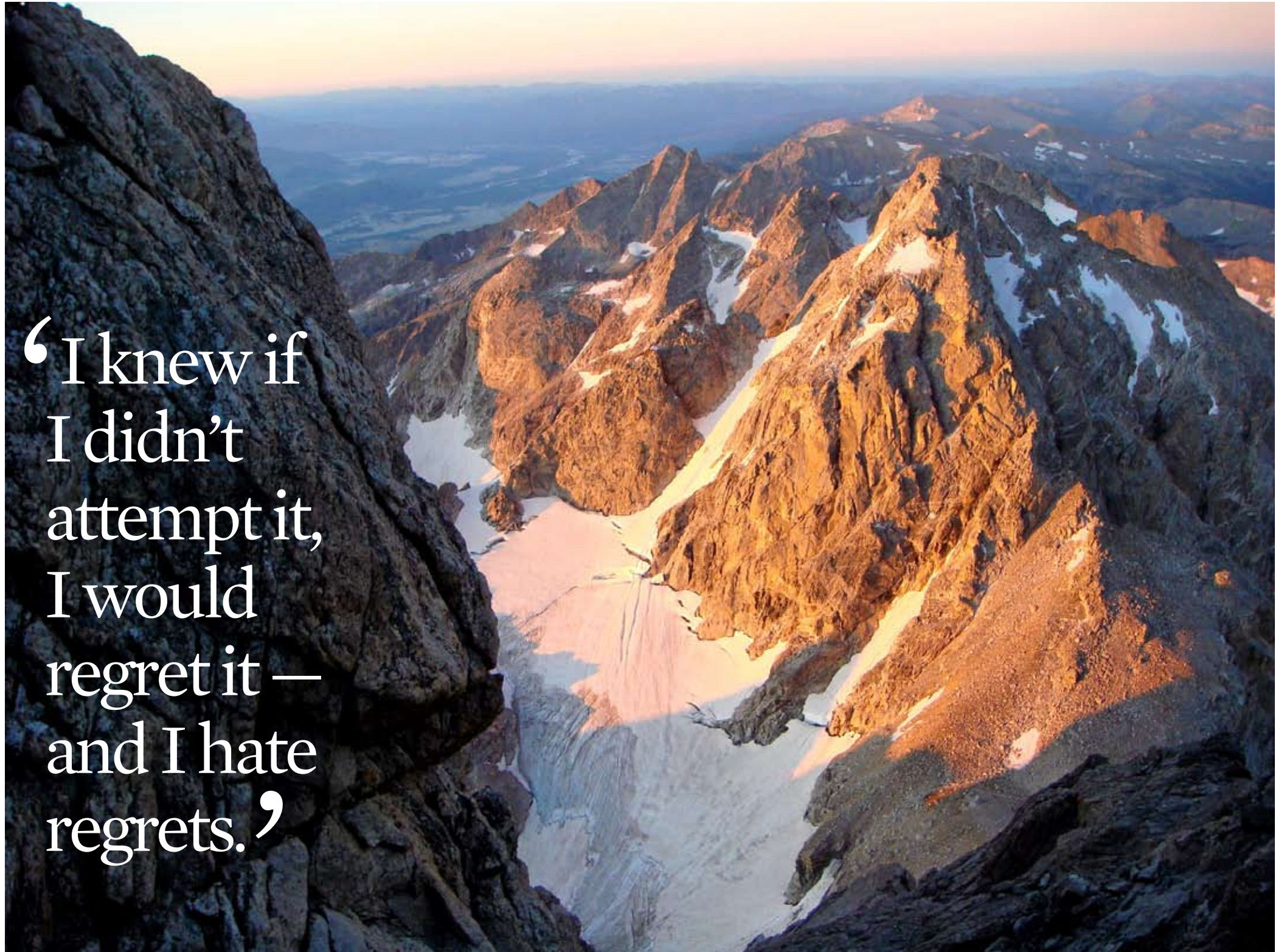
SHRIMP SELLERS KEEP ON TRUCKIN'.



D3

High notes in bloody clothes

SARAH COBURN KNOWS HOW TO SING HER 'LUCIA.'



“I knew if I didn't attempt it, I would regret it — and I hate regrets.”

More than mountains TO CLIMB

• Tulsan makes Grand Teton ascent that wouldn't leave her mind.

BY MATT GLEASON
World Scene Writer

Tammie Dooley doesn't have kneecaps. Doctors removed them 20 years ago, leaving the 47-year-old Tulsan with only ligaments tied together at the center of where bone once protected two knee joints. Blame it on Dooley, a former small-town high school basketball forward who tore up her knees for the sake of points on a scoreboard. Game over for college ball, but Dooley had other plans for those knees — the kind that put them under the freelance writer as she climbed all 13,775 feet of

for more

To read Dooley's blog, visit Soloroadtrip.com.

Wyoming's Grand Teton in early September.

"She's a fighter," said Dooley's younger sister, Lisa Pierce. That's high praise coming from a woman who's fought multiple sclerosis for more than 20 years.

Dooley's own fight began not on the mountain, but in her bed one morning last January.

"This is going to be the year," Dooley told her husband, Tom.

Then he looked right back at her and said, "What's taken you so long?"

After all, Dooley lived in Jackson Hole, Wyo., from 2000-2003. All

the while, Grand loomed in the distance.

Dooley often snapped pictures of Grand, but a flat picture can't convey what it's like to reach its summit on two trashed knees, then look around as if all of Wyoming centered around one woman.

It was time. To heck with her trashed knees, Dooley was going to finally climb Grand.

"I knew if I didn't attempt it," she said, "I would regret it — and I hate regrets."

A reminder in gold

For the better part of a decade, Dooley's worn a gold pendant on a chain around her neck. It's dangled there so long, she all but forgot it. One day in spin class, its significance presented itself.

To prepare a 47-year-old body to climb 20 miles round-trip up and down a mountain, it helps to



Tammie Dooley atop Grand Teton. She made the climb in September. Blogging about her plans to friends created a source of inspiration. "Once you start throwing it out there," Dooley said, "you become committed."

Courtesy photos

ride a stationary bike at a pace that flipped and flopped Dooley's pendant until it literally hit her in the face. Thwap. She felt it, then saw the line drawing of Grand Teton all in gold. Dooley kept pedaling. All that going nowhere would help her conquer Grand.

Although motivation dangled from her necklace, it was still hard working out two hours a day, five to six days a week for six months. She couldn't give up, though. As Dooley's sister, Lisa, said, "There are no quitters in my family."

To achieve a goal, Dooley said, make it public. Tell all your friends, family and anybody else reading your blog.

"Once you start throwing it out

there," she said, "you become committed."

9 a.m. ... September 8

At the end of August, Dooley drove to Wyoming. Then, for the next eight days, she acclimated to the altitude and proved to her knees that if they could handle a hike up a few of the local ski mountains, including Snow King, they might just survive Grand.

To make it to the top, she'd have to rely on a blonde-haired female guide and everything she learned in a two-day mountaineering course. Grit did the rest.

At 9 a.m. Sept. 8, Dooley and her

SEE CLIMB D6

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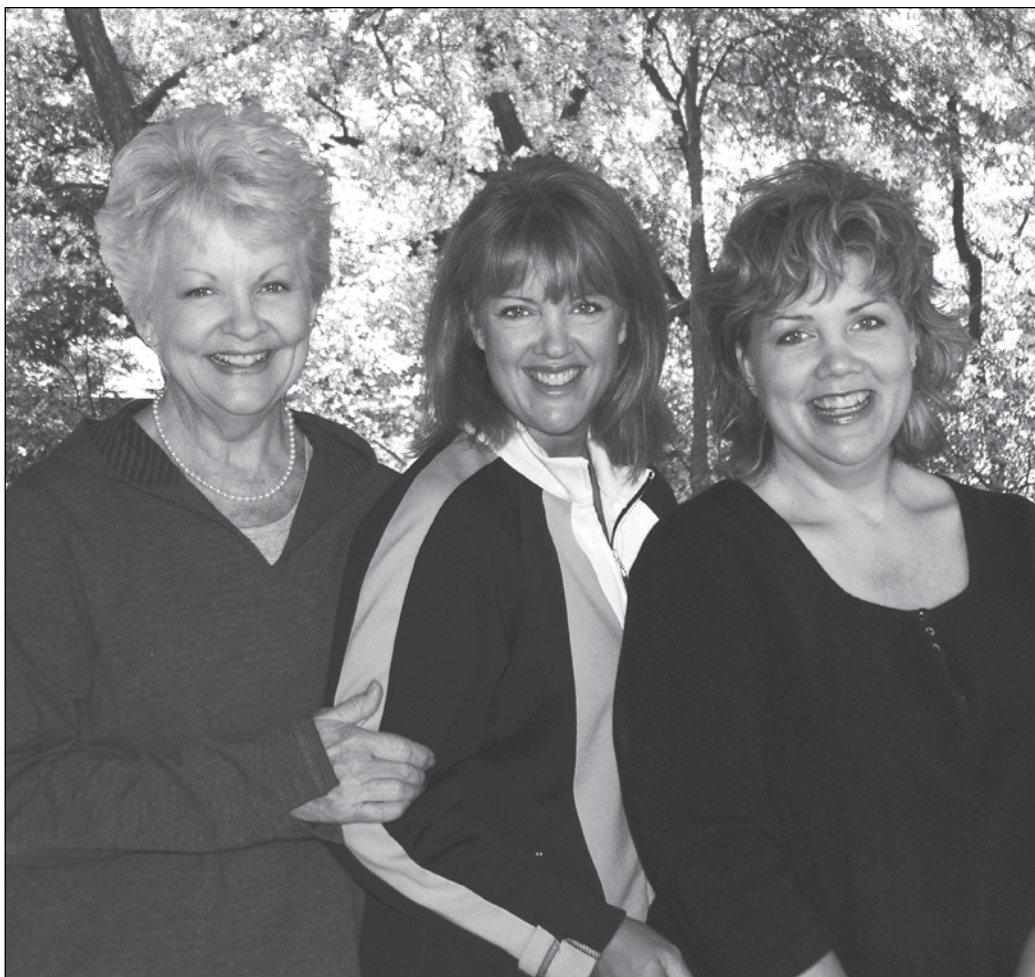


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Family Medicine



From the left: Tammie Dooley's mother, Dooley and her sister, Lisa Pierce. Courtesy

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CLIMB:

Her guides told her she wouldn't sleep that night. They were right.

FROM D1

braced knees began their ascent.

Six hours later, they reached Grand's base camp, some 11,000 feet up. Dinner was a dried meal of chicken curry with vegetables. It was actually good. Her bedroom was a bright orange tent. The guides told her she wouldn't sleep. They were right.

At 3 a.m., she crawled out of her tent. It wasn't light for another 3½ hours but that didn't matter. The moon would light the way.

During the climb, Dooley's knees were fine, but her calves felt like they were going to explode as her exposed fingers reached out in the darkness.

'Sweeping conviction'

Finally, after 10 years of wondering what it would be like to stand atop Grand, Dooley reached the summit.

"The exertion required to get there, and the grandeur of the view that greeted me were immense," she recalled. "I was humbled by the magnificence of the perch I'd managed to reach.

"While the achievement was of personal significance, the powerful impact of such natural beauty served to abruptly put me in my place. I understood in one glance my insignificance.

"There are few things that can so readily, and with such sweeping conviction, reveal what it is to be mortal."

Far away in Boswell, down near Hugo in southeastern Oklahoma, Dooley's sister was at home climbing her own mountain — one that Lisa, and every other person battling MS, hopes to conquer one of these days.

Recently, Lisa heard that her sister considers her an inspiration. The news made her voice quiver.

"I never knew that," Lisa said. "I never knew that I was her inspiration. She's always been mine.

"... When I beat this wicked disease, who knows, we may decide to summit somewhere else. Until then, I'll do it through her."

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Tammie Dooley

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