

# IN DETAIL



Lucy Rise, left, and Corell Moore in the mountains of Monte Rosa in the Alps.

## Climb Every Mountain

*Two Richmond trekkers hike their way around the world.*

—SANDRA SHELLEY—

**F**ifty-seven-year-old Lucy Rise says she often gets asked two questions: “Why in the world are you doing this?” and “Where are you going next?”

Rise and her friend, Corell Moore, together have hiked eight mountains, including two of the “7 Summits”—the highest mountains on each continent.

“We started this kind of late, we weren’t spring chickens,” says Moore, 55, with a laugh. Moore has also run four marathons.

“I think a lot of people were surprised with me because I’ve never been that athletic a person,” says Rise.

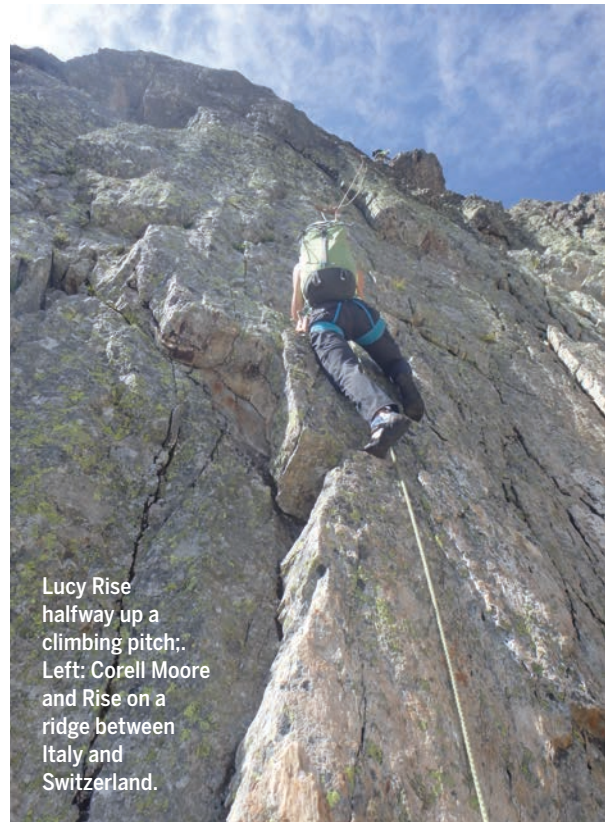
Rise and Moore began mountain climbing in 2009. The two mostly-stay-at-home moms (both are volunteers at St. Christopher’s School in Richmond and Moore is working on a Ph.D. in solar energy at Virginia Commonwealth University) have nine children between them.

Their mountain climbing journey began with Kilimanjaro (19,341 feet) in January 2009, as part of a group trip with 11 women. Some in “Team WAKI”—an acronym for a Swahili phrase meaning “women who summit”—were experienced hikers; others had never slept in a tent before.

As is usually the case, the hike began early—at 1 a.m. Headlamps helped to illuminate the dark terrain. It took five days of climbing the mountain for most of the group to adjust to the altitude of the high camp from which they would summit. As they climbed, they went through five separate eco-systems, from jungle, to grassy plain with strange Dr. Seuss-like plants (giant groundsels), to a barren moon-like setting, just before reaching the glacier. As they went up, wind chills reached negative 27 degrees Fahrenheit; the dry air chapped their lips and skin.

“We went from sleeveless shirts, to by the end, a heavy-duty parka,” says Moore.

“You really don’t understand how hard it is until you get



Lucy Rise  
halfway up a  
climbing pitch;  
Left: Corell Moore  
and Rise on a  
ridge between  
Italy and  
Switzerland.

*“You really don’t understand how hard it is until you get there. It was so physically challenging. And yet, it was a great adventure.”*

there. It was so physically challenging,” says Rise. And yet, “it was a great adventure. The camaraderie of going through something really hard with a group of friends is wonderful.”

Other hikes Rise and Moore have completed together include the Alps and the Andes. They’ve climbed the steep and narrow paths of Macchu Picchu with their families—who are supportive, but sometimes a little nervous for them. (Rise has also climbed Elbrus in Russia—at 18,510 feet, another 7 Summit—a journey Moore had to miss because of a broken foot.)

When not on a climb, the two friends are actively preparing for the next one. Their workouts include walking up and down the stairs at Moore’s husband Thurston’s downtown Hunton & Williams law office—22 flights, four times, saddled with 40- to 45-pound backpacks.

“Pack training is huge,” says Rise. “We do a lot of things with our backpacks full of birdseed and dog food.”

They are currently practicing their rock climbing skills at Peak Experiences to prepare for a trip to yet another 7 Summit—Carstensz Pyramid in Indonesia (16,024 feet)—where they will have to slog through swamps for five days in order to reach the mountain. Once they reach the peak, they will be evacuated in a helicopter.

Rise explains that the native population is amiable on one side of the mountain, “but apparently the ones at the exit are not so friendly.” Kidnapping is the issue. “We have been assured they’re no longer cannibals,” she says, sharing a laugh with Moore.

One of their scarier hikes involved Rainier, the iconic snow-capped summit outside of Seattle. They began the journey with some trepidation: The week before, a hiker had been killed and buried by an avalanche; another had recently turned

up missing. The circling helicopters of the search party gave the group a sense of foreboding.

Joined to the other members of their team, hands gripping the rope, they made their way up the mountain in the middle of the night. They endured cold, lingering, heavy wind gusts that “could just pick you up and throw you down,” according to Rise.

Then they came upon a huge crevice that could only be crossed by a creaky ladder bridge, about eight inches wide.

“It’s deep, deep, deep, and you look down and there’s just darkness, a big hole,” recalls Rise.

“I was too scared to look,” adds Moore. Eventually, the group crossed the crevice and reached the summit.

Altitude sickness is always a threat—one member of their rope team had to be flown out of Aconcagua for a pulmonary edema. Acclimating to altitude involves an elongated process of going

up part of the mountain, then back down again to base camp.

“They say ‘Climb high, sleep low,’” says Moore. “You slowly make your way up to a higher altitude.” Once at the top, with faces puffy from the altitude, photos are quickly snapped. “Nobody hangs around at 19,000 feet,” says Rise.

For all the challenges, there are dramatic sunrises and views, and the opportunity to travel around the world—a worthy reward.

The friends can laugh now about the time Moore nearly lost an ice boot while climbing a steep mountain face—and trying to get the boot back on while hanging suspended, her guide’s ice axe securing them from the top—or the Russian men who cursed at them for being too slow. They remember the guide warned them that their climb up Mount Rosa in the Alps would be more “technical.”

“We didn’t know what he meant by ‘technical,’” says Moore.

She shows a picture of the pair standing on a very narrow, snowy ridge at the top of the mountain. That’s the “technical.”

Moore holds her hands about a foot apart. “It’s about this wide,” she says. “You’re climbing on this ridge and on one side is Switzerland and on the other side is Italy. So, if you fall to one side you’re in Italy, and on the other side you’re in Switzerland.”

Rise is philosophical about their journeys. “I think the harder it is, the more gratifying it is to accomplish it,” she says.

“It’s funny because while you’re doing it, it’s kind of miserable. And you’re doing the inner dialogue: ‘Why did I sign up for this trip? What was I thinking?’” she adds. “And yet when I get back to Richmond, the first thing I do is start combing the web for some new adventure.” ✱

## THE RESUME

**Other great summits around the world that Rise and Moore have climbed.**

Aconcagua, Argentina, 22,841 feet

Cayambe and Cotopaxi peaks, Ecuador, 18,997 feet and 19,348 feet

Everest Base Camp and Island Peak, Nepal, 17,600 feet and 20,300 feet

Mount Rainier, Washington, 14,410 feet

Nevado Urus and Ishinca, Peru, 17,000 feet and 18,143 feet