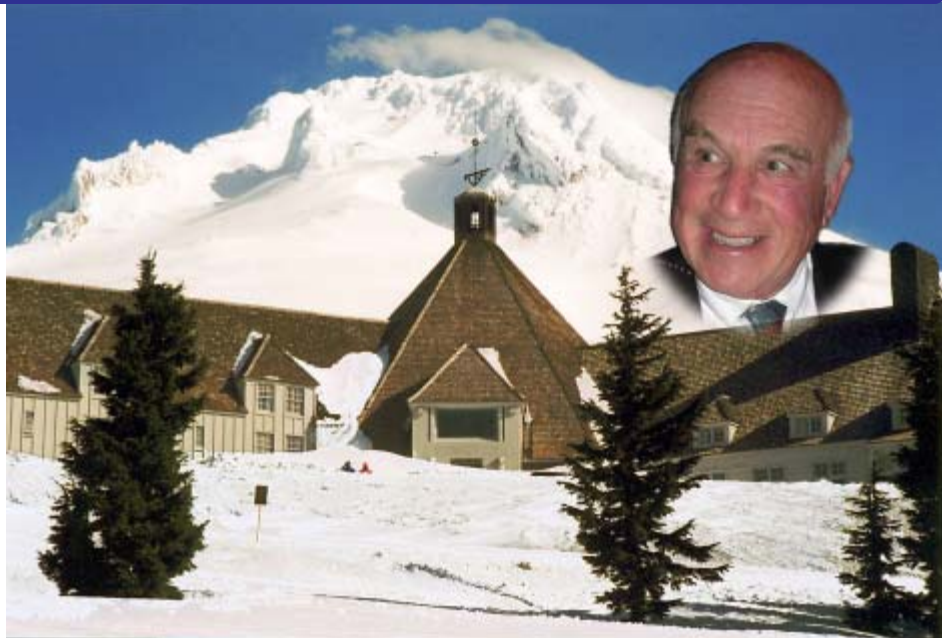


Richard Kohnstamm

Richard L. Kohnstamm, who transformed Timberline Lodge into a national skiing institution in the 1950s, died on Friday, April, 21, 2006, after becoming ill at his family's cabin on Mount Hood. He was 80 years old.

Kohnstamm assumed management of the Depression-era Timberline Lodge in the early '50s, after it had been closed for more than a decade. He installed chairlifts and launched the first lift-served summer skiing in the U.S. He later convinced the federal government to construct the Wy'East Day Lodge to spare Timberline from the daily toll of skier traffic. Timberline, built as a public works project in 1937, is now a National Historic Landmark.



In 1992, Kohnstamm's contributions to the growth of the sport and creation of a resort icon led to his induction into the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame and Museum in Ishpeming, Mich.

Kohnstamm is survived by his wife, Molly; sons, Jeff, John, Kevin and David; and 10 grandchildren.

Bill Kirschner



H. William "Bill" Kirschner, the founder of K2 and the father of the fiberglass ski, died of pneumonia Saturday, April 23, 2006, at the age of 87.

In 1961, using a pair of borrowed skis as a pattern, Bill Kirschner made a pair of fiberglass skis for an upcoming winter vacation in Sun Valley, Idaho. They worked so well, he decided to produce them commercially.

The early models peeled like bananas as soon as they hit the cold. "It was trial and error and hard work," recalled his son Bruce of Vashon Island. Finally, Kirschner hit upon a "wet-wrap" process, in which he wound fiberglass fabric around a lightweight core of wood, then baked the ski into shape.

In 1964, Kirschner Manufacturing delivered 250 pairs of skis to the market. The following year, it was 1,600 pairs. In 1967, the company was named K2, after the world's second-highest mountain and for the two Kirschner brothers, Bill and Don.

In 2001, he was inducted into the U. S. National Ski Hall of Fame, honored as "one of the great ski entrepreneurs of the 1960s, the golden years of the United States ski business."

Otto Lang



Otto Lang, a pioneer of Northwest skiing and filmmaker, died Monday, January 30, 2006, at his West Seattle home at the age of 98. He had been suffering from heart disease.

He founded ski schools on Mount Rainier, Mount Baker and Mount Hood, was ski instructor to the stars, but also a movie director, author, photographer.

Lang was born in 1908 in the village of Zenica, Bosnia, to an Austrian father and Croatian mother. It was the year Bosnia became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, the family left for Salzburg, Austria. Otto, then 10, found his first pair of skis -- Austrian army surplus from the war -- for 10 cents. The young Lang became smitten with skiing, proving adept as a racer and jumper.

He was hired in 1929 by Hannes Schneider, considered the father of modern skiing, to teach at the famed Austrian ski area, St. Anton am Arlberg. Lang brought the Arlberg turning technique to the United States.

One of his best known pupils was Gretchen Fraser, Olympic gold medalist in 1948. Check the Timberline trail map. One of the runs bears Otto Lang's name.