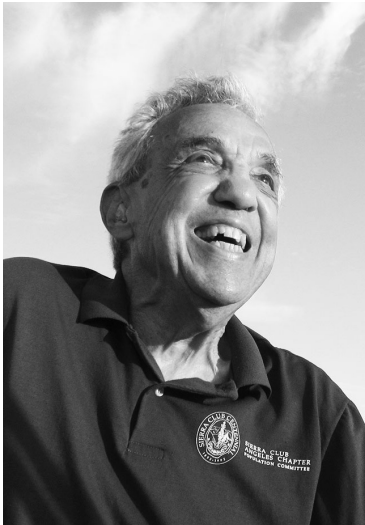


Alan Kuper — in Memoriam

BY FRED ELBEL

Alan Kuper, long time environmental activist, died at the age of 84 in his home in Shaker Heights, Ohio, on December 13, 2008. He had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of stomach cancer that all too quickly took its toll. His parting words were, “Let there be enough love in the world.”



Alan Kuper — scientist, environmentalist, veteran, and immigration-reform activist — died December 13, 2008.

Illinois, Post-Doc. Princeton). His professors included science luminaries Enrico Fermi and Edward Teller. His education was interrupted by World War II when he enlisted in the Navy

In his youth, Dr. Kuper took pride in being an Eagle Scout and at the age of 16, visited National Parks along the West Coast. He spent the next summer as a cowboy on a ranch in Wyoming.

Dr. Kuper was educated at the University of Chicago as a solid-state physicist (B.S. University of Chicago, Ph.D. University of

Air Corps V-5 program. As the need for fliers diminished, he served as a Navy radio technician. After his discharge, he spent a summer in Mexico learning Spanish, keeping bees, and repairing cars.

Dr. Kuper married Ginger Aplon in 1949 and moved to the University of Illinois in Urbana where he earned his Ph.D. in physics. In 1957, Bell Laboratories hired him as a scientist.

“The Sierra Club has made hard choices before, and we cannot think the way politicians do. They think short-term and they avoid hard choices, but hard choices not made now become much harder choices that must be made in the future.

— Alan Kuper¹ ”

In 1964 Dr. Kuper spent a year as a Visiting Professor at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). He enjoyed the academic life and remained there to become an Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and Applied Physics, winning the Wittke Award for creative undergraduate teaching.

In 1969–70 he, his wife and their three children spent a sabbatical year in Israel where he performed research at the Technion in Haifa. They spent two summers hiking and exploring ten countries across Europe in a VW camper.

Alan Kuper left CWRU in 1978 to devote himself to environmental concerns, consulting on solar energy and fiber optics. He returned to Cleveland to become chair of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club and was notably successful at building membership and fundraising.

Fred Elbel is a computer and political consultant. His career spans several decades in the computer industry in management, technical, and financial areas and consulting. He has been a director of SUSPS, co-chair of the Defend Colorado Now initiative, and director of Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform.

I first met Alan just after Sierrans for U.S. Population Stablization (SUSPS) was formed in 1997. I was a Sierra Club Chapter population committee chair at the time, and Alan had contacted me regarding the Sierra Club's recent abandonment of their long-standing US population policy that acknowledged mass immigration as the predominant contributor to unending U.S. population growth. He invited me to join SUSPS, a group of dedicated environmentalists (www.SUSPS.org).

Out of great concern for future generations and our future environment, Alan and SUSPS worked diligently to return the Club to the true environmental course that included immigration-driven population growth. We fought long and hard for many years against the Club establishment, who, to our amazement, directed an unending series of blows quite below the belt in annual Club elections where we ran board candidates and population-related ballot questions.

“**What we are trying to tell the environmental establishment is that they really can't ignore the U.S. population trend. We have to talk about the physical and biological and resource limits that nature imposed on us.**

—Alan Kuper²”

It was only in 2004 that the cause of such vehement opposition was exposed: the *Los Angeles Times* revealed that investor David Gelbaum had rewarded the Club with total donations exceeding \$100 million, stating, “I did tell [Sierra Club Executive Director] Carl Pope in 1994 or 1995 that if they ever came out anti-immigration, they would never get a dollar from me.”³

Alan was a man of principle. Throughout these struggles, Alan always maintained the moral

high ground. He knew that his environmental position was correct and maintained—often vociferously—that our campaigns need not resort to the underhanded tactics of our opponents.



The Voice of the Sierra Club

Alan's environmental position was succinctly explained by the irrefutable classic environmental equation $I = P \times A \times T$: that environmental impact is a function of population times affluence (per capita consumption) times the level of environmental harm caused by the technologies employed. (See Alan's fall 2006 *Social Contract* article, “300 Million and More—An Environmental Perspective”⁴ and his 2006 article, “The Silent Crisis,”⁵ *Free Inquiry*, Volume 24, Number 5.)

Alan was incredibly persistent. With the tenacity of a bulldog he ran for the Sierra Club board three times, even after it was revealed that the Club prioritized corporate-style funding over environmental principle. Although he was never elected, Alan's platform always focused on implementing environmental conservatism in the context of the fundamental environmental equation.

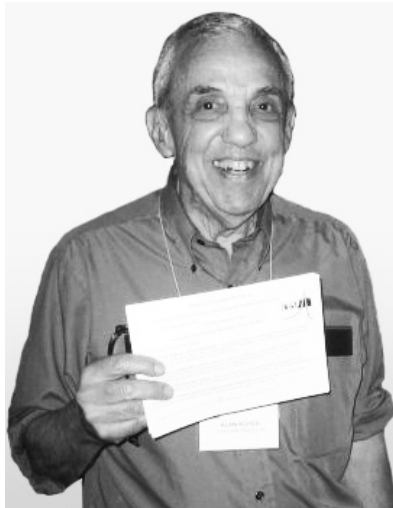
Alan had focused on population issues since 1989, and had chaired the Ohio Sierra Club population committee. For over 25 years, Alan was the “Voice of the Sierra Club” on WCLV-FM,

Cleveland. He was awarded two national Sierra Club awards and in 1995 was named the nation's "most effective population-environment volunteer" by Population Communications International. He also served on FAIR's Board of Advisors and was a regular participant at the annual Writers' Workshops sponsored by *The Social Contract*.

By the year 2000, it was clear that the predominant mainstream environmental groups unfortunately were following lock-step behind the misdirected lead of the Sierra Club in refusing to acknowledge the environmental consequences of mass immigration.⁶

With renewed energy and indomitable enthusiasm (we fondly referred to him as "the Energizer Bunny"), Alan formed CUSP (Comprehensive U.S. Sustainable Population)—Congressional Environmental Scorecard.⁷ CUSP published a true environmental scorecard that included Congressional votes affecting future U.S. population numbers.

Alan was my friend; we shared a spirit of camaraderie. In 1997, I drove to a population conference at the Stanley Hotel (made famous by the movie, "The Shining") in Estes Park, Colorado. Having decided to stay for the next day's session, but lacking a reservation, I prevailed upon Alan, who graciously allowed me to sleep on his cold, hard hotel room floor. Notwithstanding that experience, our friendship persevered. On August 20, 2004, it was my privilege to be interviewed along with Alan on the Boulder, Colorado radio station, KGNU.⁸ Always the educator, he steadfastly pointed out to callers that environmental causes are lost causes without population stabilization.



Alan Kuper displays CUSP letter at 2005 Sierra Summit.

After one of our SUSPS board meetings in 1998, several of us hiked Mt. Bruno, south of San Francisco. Alan was thrilled at seeing the numerous varieties of wild flowers along the hike. He radiated contagious happiness at being immersed in the wild environment he loved and had fought so valiantly to preserve.



Hikers on Mt. Bruno, south of San Francisco, California. Left: Alan Kuper, middle row right: Leon Kolankiewicz, back row: Fred Elbel (second from right) and Brenda Walker (right).

I will never forget Alan Kuper and his unceasing efforts to preserve our natural environment for future generations. I hope that these future generations not only remember and value the efforts of leaders like Alan, but carry forth with their own necessary efforts toward environmental sustainability. ■

“Population stability is the most important environmental issue because it drives everything else. Half the population growth comes from immigration. Too many people using too many resources degrade the environment. Surely everyone can see that.”

—Alan Kuper⁹

Endnotes

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3. “The Man Behind the Land,” by Kenneth Weiss, *Los Angeles Times* (October 27, 2004).
4. Published by the Council for Secular Humanism, Vol 24, No 5 (2004) http://www.secularhumanism.org/library/fi/kuper_24_5.htm
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- http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc_17_01/tsc_17_01_kuper.shtml
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7. CUSP (Comprehensive U.S. Sustainable Population) - Congressional Environmental Scorecard, <http://www.uscongress-enviroscore.org>
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10. “It’s Past Time to Curb Immigration...,” by Froma Harrop, *VDARE.com* (January 15, 2001).

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For many environmentalists concerned about ancient trees in the Northwest or free-flowing streams, they know in their bones the population connection... But population is untidy. It involves the emotions surrounding immigration.

— Alan Kuper¹⁰

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Alan Kuper and his wife Ginger, hugging an old-growth tree in Oregon in 1993.