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It's no secret that communication as we know it is rapidly changing. Here are some new ways we are using online tools to keep you connected:

**Letters & Science News & Notes:** L&S is home to world-class teaching, innovation, and research. We are now proud to have a new dynamic blog "Letters & Science News & Notes" that showcases our caliber: <http://blogs.lwisc.edu/lnews>

Faculty and staff submit notes each month from their departments and programs. We tally up the stories and post them online. Once a month, we pick five Top Stories and e-mail them out to more than 6,000 L&S faculty, staff, and graduate students including our Board of Visitors and the UW System Regents. Check out News & Notes for your one-stop shop of all things Letters & Science!

**Twitter:** The college is officially Twittering — you can find us online at [www.twitter.com/lnews](http://www.twitter.com/lnews). Twitter is an extremely popular social media tool for quick, succinct micro-blogging. Twitter has made it possible for us to engage with students, faculty, alumni and friends in new ways. Follow us on Twitter to stay updated on L&S news, events, alumni achievements, and more.

**Facebook:** We are on Facebook under "UW-Madison College of Letters & Science." Facebook is an equally powerful social media tool that allows us to connect with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends. Find us on Facebook, become a fan, and show your L&S pride.

We have more projects ahead and we look forward to exploring the ever-changing world of communication with our alumni, friends, and supporters.

—Megan Costello (BA '07, Journalism and English) Letters & Science Outreach Specialist

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Send YOUR news and updates to: [mthiak@ls.admin.wisc.edu](mailto:mthiak@ls.admin.wisc.edu).

## News Flash: Nice Guy DOESN'T Finish Last

*MENSCH An honorable, decent person, an authentic person, a person who helps you when you need help.*

In recent years, it has become common to read news of investment scandals, gutted employee pension plans, and companies facing bankruptcy while CEOs enjoy lavish lifestyles. Stories about entrepreneurs and business leaders who are mensches are few and far between. Today, it can be hard to remember that there are people who are not part of a "get rich at any cost" ethos.

Although it might seem like it, the term "business mensch" is not an oxymoron. Noah Alper is living proof that it is possible to be highly successful in business without striking a Faustian pact with evil.

Since receiving his bachelor's degree in economics in 1969, Alper has started six businesses beginning with Bread and Circus, a natural food store in Brookline, MA, which he founded during the 1970s. Throughout his career, he has embedded ideas of service in his operations and became an early proponent of what is now known as "cause marketing."

Alper is best known as the founder of "Noah's Bagels," a highly successful chain of retail bagel stores originally based in Berkeley, CA. The first store opened in 1989 and expanded to 38 locations before he sold it and the "shmeat" beloved by Noah's customers, to Einstein Bros. for \$100 million in 1996.

To get to that point, Alper built his bagel business around basic — and sound — business principles. He also made sure that two key elements of the business identity were genuine: commitment to kosher food and authentic community engagement.

Noah's was a kosher business from its first day of operation. At the time, Alper was not very religious, but felt that the food needed to be kosher if they were



Noah Alper

to give customers a real New York bagel experience. "I'm a businessman and I looked into it very carefully. I found that 99% of what I planned to sell was certified kosher, so at first I didn't see a big difference in how we would operate."

### My dad always taught me that doing good is good for business.

The ways in which running an authentic kosher business made a difference quickly became apparent. And, while it might have been tempting to use the label without strictly following kosher practices, Alper came to see the requirements as reminders of his own values. In the end, he adjusted his business practices rather than give up his values.

Early on, he brought in a partner who was not Jewish to operate the business on the Sabbath and holidays. "Beyond that, it was much more complicated than I had imagined. Being truly kosher affected what employees could eat, what they could heat in the store microwave, and what we could sell," Alper recalls. "There were times when I was tempted to get rid of kosher,

but in the end I was more than paid back in the customer loyalty and gratitude of people who kept kosher and did not have many restaurants where they could eat."

Noah's Bagels also embodied the idea of service from the first day customers walked through the doors. "At the end of our first day of operations, we had a lot of leftover bagels. Rather than throw them out, I put them in a large trash bag and took them to People's Park and gave them to the homeless guys," says Alper. "My dad always taught me that doing good is good for business, and this just made more sense than throwing the bagels out."

What began as one man's random act of kindness grew into an institutional culture along with the business. Within six and a half years, there were 38 stores and a central bakery and commissary supplying retail markets and the chain of shops. Even after Starbucks became a minority investor, Alper retained a personal connection to each of his shops.

In a 1996 interview, Alper said, "We want to maintain the feeling that our stores are the neighborhood bakery, and it is for this reason that we want to open each store as if it is the first. We want to instill the local mentality in each store."

For Alper, the local mentality meant cultivating neighborhood relationships with customers. It also meant engaging employees, from the lowest paid high school students to store managers, in community service projects in each location. "People throughout the company got really excited about this part of our business culture. It brought out people's better sides and allowed them to show their altruism. It also helped to build strong store

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## MENSCH

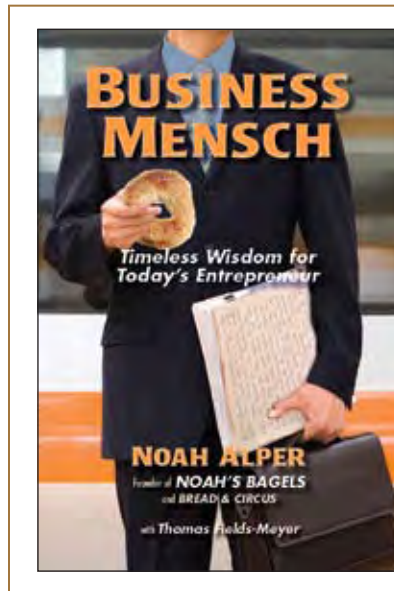
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teams when people worked side by side to improve the communities around them."

Long before community service and cause marketing became fashionable, Alper understood that doing good would be good for the bottom line. In addition to the wisdom found in Jewish traditions and lessons learned from his father, he credits his time in Madison as a source of inspiration for his philosophy.

"I came to Madison as a transfer student from NYU. I only spent a year and a half in Madison, but I view that time as my one and only collegiate experience," he says. "It was a meaningful, significant, and scary time, and Madison was at the forefront of a transformative historical period."

It was a time when the boundaries between classrooms and society were blurred. Alper learned a lot from his experiences with the Green Lantern eating and film co-op and the Mifflin Street Grocery Co-op along with his campus experiences. "Working with many people on communal initiatives



NOAH ALPER

*Business Mensch: Timeless Wisdom for Today's Entrepreneur*, by Noah Alper with Thomas Fields-Meyer, will be released in fall 2009. Written by serial entrepreneur Noah Alper, *Business Mensch* weaves together timeless wisdom and over 35 years of business and nonprofit management experience. Alper is a consultant to aspiring entrepreneurs and a dynamic motivational speaker. His experience includes concept creation, marketing, retailing, food service, and sales management. [www.businessmensch.net](http://www.businessmensch.net)

to change the world, I learned to give back," Alper remembers. "I also learned the value of letting employees express themselves, which really helped make Noah's a positive place to work."

He also became a serious lifelong learner, taking time out from the business world to move to Israel and study in a traditional Yeshiva after selling Noah's.

In 2003 he opened a new business, the Bar-Ristorante Raphael, a kosher vegetarian restaurant in Berkeley. Two years later, he opened Noah Alper Consulting, an enterprise devoted

to helping entrepreneurs move from great ideas to successful business.

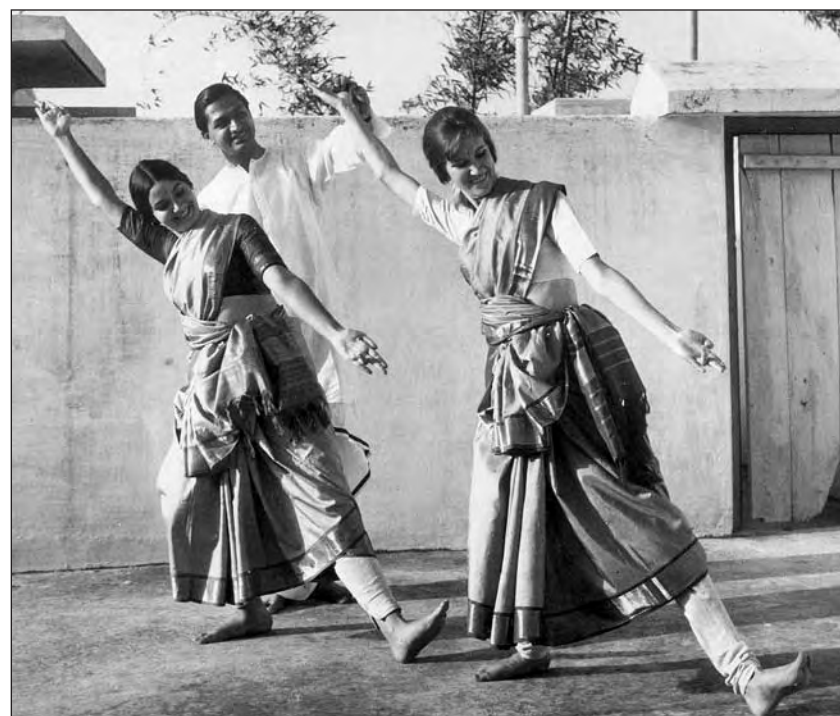
Asked what advice he might give to students graduating from UW-Madison in 2009, Alper's response is fast and sure: "These are hard times. As a business person, whether by intention or default, this is the age of the entrepreneur. Be true to yourself. Take risks. Go forward without thinking like the herd. And draw on the UW-Madison culture and traditions of self-expression and individualism to actualize your dreams."

## Around the World in 50 Years

Since UW-Madison offered its first study abroad program in 1959, over 20,000 students have studied in other countries. In 2006-07, Madison's Division of International Studies offered IIO programs on every continent except Antarctica; UW-Madison ranked 10th among American research universities for overall study abroad participation.

For a historical perspective,

see *I'll Remember This Trip: Fifty Years of Study Abroad*, published last September and written by Joan Raducha (BA '72, anthropology, MA '76, South Asian studies, PhD '82, Buddhist studies), former associate dean in the Division of International Studies and director of International Academic Programs. <http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/>.



*UW-Madison study abroad programs have been distinctive from the beginning. Starting in the 1960s, the Madison campus has gone beyond traditional programs in Europe to innovate and create substantial study abroad experiences in India, Mexico, and other countries.*

### Joanne Creighton is Leaving Mount Holyoke Presidency



MT. HOLYOKE/BEN BARNHART

Joanne Creighton (BA '64, English) will step down as president of Mount Holyoke College at the end of 2009-10 after nearly 15 years of service. She came to the college as a strong advocate for the tradition of American liberal arts colleges. She is the 17th president of the world's oldest women's college.

### Sue Rosser Named Provost of San Francisco State



GA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Sue Rosser (BA '69, French, MS '71, PhD '73, zoology) a scholar who has focused on attracting and retaining women in science, has been appointed provost of San Francisco State University. She was dean of the Georgia Institute of Technology's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts,