

December 2, 2002

To: Neighborhood Council Leaders

From: Greg Nelson, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

Re: List of Neighborhood Council Meetings. Old Northridge NC Party.

On their own, the Valley Neighborhood Councils convinced their local newspaper, the Daily News, to regularly print a listing of their meetings. If anyone is looking for an example of the influence that Neighborhood Councils can have, here's a good one.

A map of the Valley and a listing of the scheduled meetings can found in today's Daily News on page three (!!!!) and on the home page of their Web site at [www.dailynews.com](http://www.dailynews.com).

As I mentioned before, a "thank you" can be a powerful ally. Those, inside or outside of the Valley, who would like to express their appreciate to the editor may send a message to [dnmetro@dailynews.com](mailto:dnmetro@dailynews.com) or fax a message to (818) 713.0058.

Hint: If I were a Neighborhood Council in another part of the City, I'd be approaching my local newspaper with this example.

Thought you might also be interested in this article that is in the Daily News today.

## **Council throws holiday block party**

By James Nash

Staff Writer, Daily News, December 16, 2002

NORTHRIDGE -- There was no Santa Claus, no giant Christmas tree, no stockings hung with care. Instead, there were tattooed artists and musicians, a bicycle-powered Ferris wheel and abstract paintings on the wall.

The Old Northridge Neighborhood Council -- also known as the Gilgamesh, after an ancient Mesopotamian king -- prides itself on being a little eccentric, and its block party Sunday to ring in the holidays put all its quirks on display.

The merriment included a performing circus elephant, a man in his 70s who juggled with his feet, and a disc jockey spinning hip-hop and trance music from a turntable. Behind the entertainment was a serious effort to unite many residents of the proudly eclectic neighborhood just south of California State University, Northridge.

"It's just us trying to give people a better feeling of their streets," said Don Larson, the organizer of the Old Northridge Neighborhood Council. "This is our holiday. It's just people being happy and doing things."

The Old Northridge Neighborhood Council is one of 58 such councils certified in Los Angeles under a reform to the City Charter designed to give local communities a stronger voice in city government.

Like many of the panels, the Old Northridge Neighborhood Council deals with potholes, graffiti and other local quality-of-life issues. But the group also tries to promote the arts and culture throughout Los Angeles, and in fact meetings on those topics draw more people than meetings on more routine neighborhood issues, Larson said.

Sunday's block party reflected the group's split personality. Near Larson's home on Etiwanda Avenue, parents and young children munched on cotton candy and watched acrobats perform in a traveling circus. At Das Bauhaus, a lime green apartment building that Larson owns down the street, young adults sporting tattoos and body piercings looked at abstract paintings and read poems as musicians performed on stage.

"I think this has brought together people in ways I never dreamed possible," said Jay Christensen, an economics professor at CSUN and a member of the neighborhood council. "We're one of the smallest neighborhood councils in the whole city but also one of the most cohesive."

Blanche Maine and her husband, Ron, who have lived in the neighborhood since 1955, dropped by the party out of curiosity. As music pumped in the background and young people mingled and smoked cigarettes, the Maines admitted that they felt a little out of place.

"I don't think I fit in here," Blanche Maine said, "but, well, it's interesting."