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**KASSIA MEADOR  
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# AN EVENING WITH JEN O'BRIEN

BY KASSIA MEADOR  
PHOTOS NICOLE GRODESKY



Jen O'Brien

Imagine having a perfect wave in your backyard. The wind is never on it. There's a bowly section with a workable long, clean line. It's not made for surfing, but professional skateboarders Jen O'Brien and Bob Burnquist find it useful anyway. Their backyard ramp, with its six-foot channel and rounded hip, is more like a skate park and on any given day you might just find some

of your favorite pro and amateur skaters dropping in.

The evening we visited was pretty normal according to Jen. Cara Beth Burnside was hanging out. So were Lyndsey Adams, Vanessa Torres, Aurora Kimble, and a whole bunch of other happy skaters. Really, it was hard to keep track of all the action. Everyone took turns on the ramp working on

maneuvers or just keeping a good line. There was also a huge metal pipe. I don't even know how Jen and Bob got that thing on their property, but it was pretty sick!

Jen's daughter Lotus was cruising around all dressed up in her pink tutu and red sparkling shoes. What a little monster! She was jumping off picnic tables, pushing her play

car down the mini ramps, and even rolling around on a skateboard. I guess it's in her blood to skate.

After everyone got a good session in and Nicole and I asked ourselves why we didn't become pro skaters instead of surfers, I sat down for a little one on one with Jen. Here's the scoop on her and her good life.

THE ONLY TIME I HAVE EVER RUN INTO A BIT OF DISCRIMINATION WAS FROM INSECURE BOYS WHO WERE BUMMED TO SEE GIRLS SKATING BETTER THAN THEM.



Cara Beth Burnside

**Jen, how old are you?**

Well, lets just say I am not 20, not 30 but lie somewhere in between.

**How long have you been skating for?**

I have been skating for about 12 years.

**Where are you from?**

I am from Volusia County Florida.

**When did you decide to move to California?**

I moved out to California about eight years ago. Florida is my home, I actually just bought a place back there, but I really like it here in California.

**Does your husband Bob help you with your skating?**

Yeah, when he comes to my comps, he'll give me some

pointers on what I should or shouldn't be doing.

**How has having a child changed your career as a professional skater?**

At first it was pretty hard to deal with having the responsibility of a child, not being able to skate and basically putting my life on hold to start another. For the first two years Lotus went everywhere with

me, but for the past year and a half I have had an awesome nanny, Aurora Kimble, who has made life a lot easier for all of us. Sometimes Aurora travels with me and Lotus, and other times Lotus just stays here with Aurora while I am on the road.

Either way I have peace of mind knowing she is in great hands and is having fun.

**Do you think you will push Lotus to be a pro skater?**

I think she will get into skating, I mean she is surrounded by it all of the time. But I don't really care what she does as long as she is happy.

**Growing up as a girl skater how did the guys treat you?**

Well, all the guys I use to roll with were always super stoked and supportive of me and my skating. I think the only time I have ever run into a bit of discrimination was from insecure boys who were bummed to see girls skating better than them.

**When you were rolling around the parks with them, did you ever think you would be a pro skater?**

No, not really I never actually thought about it. I just skated and went with the flow of my life, ending up in places I never dreamed of being. I am blessed for sure.

**Where are some of the places skating has taken you?**

I have been all over the U.S eight or nine times, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Europe, Fiji, Costa Rica, Australia and Hawaii.

**What was your favorite out of all of those places?**

I love Australia because the energy is so awesome there. It is just so far from home but I feel so grounded there. I guess because I am an air sign, I am usually all over the place and to feel grounded somewhere is great.

**Why did you get into skating vert rather than skating street?**

Since I skated a lot of parks, I skated a lot of bowls and ramps. Then I went on this road trip and all there was, was vert. I had nothing else to skate on. So I guess I am a vert skater because that was all I had to learn on.

**What do you feel has contributed to the growth of women's skating?**

In the last three or four years women's skating has grown a lot. I think it all

started with the recognition of women's snowboarding and it trickled down to us. I also think a lot of the push and support began with Patty Segovia's All Girl Skate Jam in 1997.

**Who do you think is the wave of the future for women's skating?**

I think the wave of the future is those who can do it all; vert, street, surf and board. People like that are the future of all women's extreme sports.

**What advice would you give to the girls who look up to you?**

Have fun, follow your heart and remember pain makes you stronger. So go for it.

**What is a typical day for you?**

On a typical weekday I am pretty mellow. I get up, sit in the Jacuzzi, stretch, drink lots of herbal tea, computer stuff, paper work, skate and sometimes go surf around Oside or Encinitas. But on the weekends it gets a bit crazy down at the ramp, there are always tons of people around skating and cruising around the house.

**I heard you are a Reiki master, what is that all about?**

Yep that's true I am a Reiki master. Well, Reiki is all about hands on healing. By opening your chakras and opening your blocked chakras, your natural energy is able to flow better. I also study homeopathic medicine and use the power of the crystal.

**What was the last book you read?**

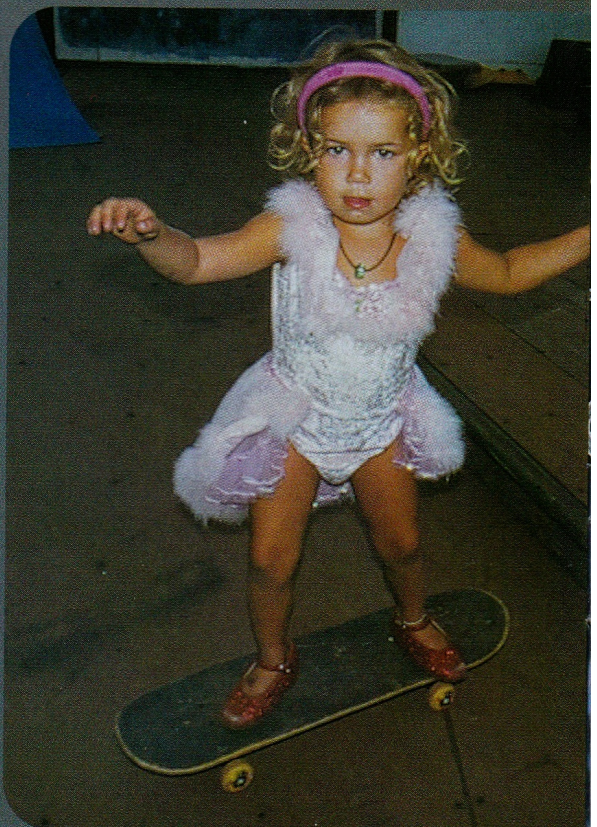
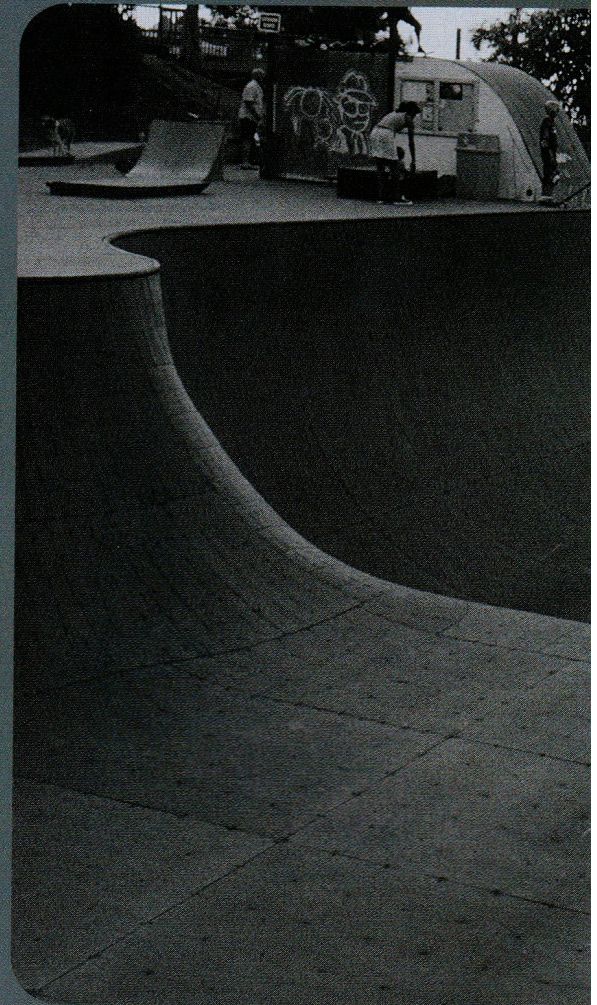
The last book I read was "Star Signs," by Linda Goodman.

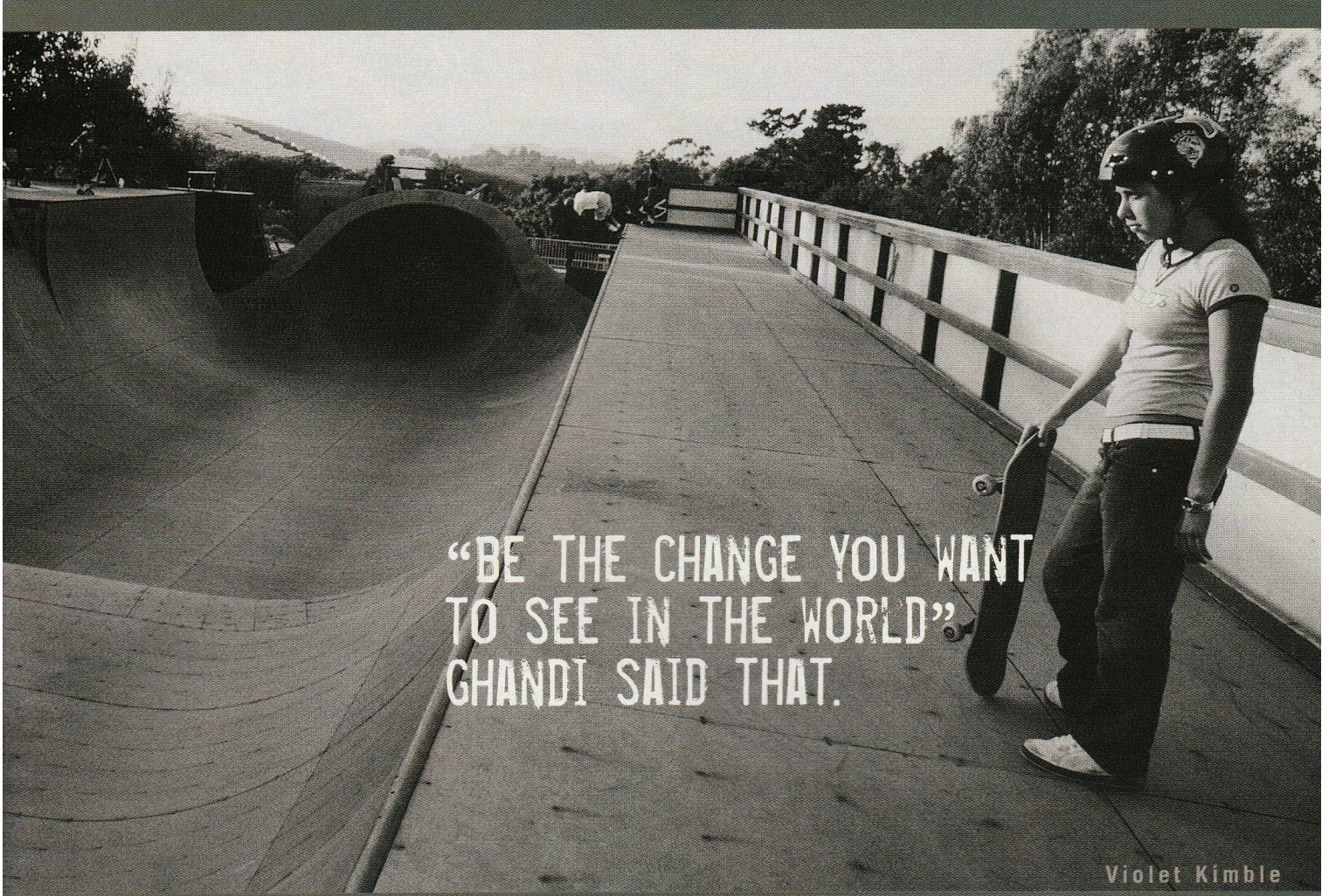
**What was the last good movie you watched?**

The last good movie I saw was Bowling for Columbine and I recommend it to everyone.

**Any words of wisdom?**

"Be the change you want to see in the world," Ghandi said that. Never follow the masses but always question the masses. ❀





“BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT  
TO SEE IN THE WORLD”  
GHANDI SAID THAT.

Violet Kimble



Lotus

Jen O'Brien