

Career paths are often fascinating revelations of people's lives, but how they happen is often not well-planned. Kim Fox, with a degree in English, worked almost three decades in the computer industry; as a technical writer, in network design/support and selling Qwest phones. Then in 2005 she started a second career in her fifties, designing and selling clasps and components, using a sophisticated Computer Aided Design (CAD) program. Her degree of preparation is impressive; although she was already making jewelry as a hobby by 2000, a bead kit she picked up spurred her to make necklaces. Classes at Phoenix College followed, in casting, for which she cast two seed pods; these won her a second and a finalist prize at the South Seas Pearl contest. At the Mining and Minerals Museum she took classes in lapidary and silversmithing; her instructors praised her design abilities and believed she should do it avocationally.

In 2003, her mother died, leaving her enough money to live on for a while. Fox took a chance, resigned from her job, found the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) online and started classes at its Carlsbad, California, campus in January 2004. In the year-long program, she received two diplomas, in Design and Graduate Gemology; the design program included

rendering and CAD. After graduation in 2005, she left for San Francisco and enrolled in the Revere Academy's Intensive Course for two months. These consisted of morning to night, six days a week studio work, including assembly of castings. In the Master Class, she completed three to four projects to other students' one, realizing that she was really honing and accumulating skills.

Afterwards, she took a job in a jewelry store in Morro Bay for a short time, then set up a studio in her garage. Fox realized she liked to create modular components, using CAD. She had purchased the student software version when at GIA, but then upgraded to the full-package of Gem Matrix, which is Rhino-based and expensive but offers support. For the output or rapid prototyping (RP) of her CAD designs, she works with Ted Carl, a Colorado jeweler with thirty years of experience and who serves on the advisory board of Gem Matrix. Carl has a RP machine, which builds up layers of resin to produce the design of the electronic file, which is an additive process. He also owns two wax machines, which mills green wax, with water jet and air, resulting in a wax version of the file; this is a subtractive process. The production sequence for CAD involves sending the electronic



RIM FOX

jewelry arts

by Robert K. Liu

SELECTION OF CLASPS BY KIM FOX, strung on necklaces of her designs. Clockwise, from top right: MOON AND MORNING STAR clasp, silver, 2.5 centimeters diameter; DECO BLOOM CLASP, silver, 4.9 centimeters wide; IN THE GROOVE, two-sided magnetic clasp, bronze, 3.0 centimeters square. When the clasp is re-oriented, it forms a diamond, (see inset image), giving an entirely different look and frames the wearer's face well. These clasps are sold under her product line, HandFast Designs. Photographs by Robert K. Liu/Ornament, except the screen capture opposite page.

