# new faces
## of FreeBSD

BY DRU LAVIGNE



This column aims to shine a spotlight on contributors who recently received their commit bit and to introduce them to the FreeBSD community. This month, the spotlight is on Eugene Grosbein, a longtime contributor who transitioned to a ports committer in March.

**Tell us a bit about yourself, your background, and your interests.**

● I was born in and live in Novokuznetsk (founded in 1618), West Siberia, Russian Federation. I lived in Novosibirsk for several years while studying at Novosibirsk State University (NSU). I have been interested in mathematics since secondary school when I got my first programmable calculator in the late '80s. That was the Russian model MK-61 with 15 addressable memory registers and 4 operating registers combined as a stack for reverse Polish notation operators (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/ru/2/27/Elektronika-Mk-61.JPG ). It had memory for 105 program instructions. My first programs were created using its machine code.

Later I took a computer class that had Z80A-based MSX-2 computers and then an IBM PS/2 pilot class (80286-based Model 30). Writing

> " For those interested in becoming a FreeBSD committer: you can do it! Help us improve FreeBSD code, docs, or ports. Improve yourself while you have fun doing this, talk to other contributors and committers, offer help and ask for help from them, and you'll make it. We need new people here!." —*EUGENE GROSBEIN*

simple video games was as much fun for me as playing them. I understood that computers would be my future fun and livelihood.

I've enjoyed reading lots of books. My father was a literature teacher and our home library was large. Also, I studied music and played guitar in a school band. I must admit that computer studies banished playing music from my life, but my taste for good music persisted.

**How did you first learn about FreeBSD and what about FreeBSD interested you?**

● I started to use FreeBSD 2.2.5-RELEASE in 1996 during my early university days, as a beginner C and Java programmer. FreeBSD was already used on some computers in the Institute of Computational Mathematics and Mathematical Geophysics, also known as the Computing Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch, where I was working and doing my diploma work. Those were the good old times when FreeBSD had /etc/sysconfig instead of /etc/rc.conf and one could use FreeBSD with 4 megabytes of RAM, but sysinstall needed 5 megabytes or early-activated swap.

Initially, I was only familiar with Microsoft operating systems: MSX-DOS, MS-DOS, and early versions of Windows. FreeBSD opened a whole new universe for me—the open-source approach and the Unix world as well as the ability to change systems at once, network transparent graphics, and lots of other things.

I continued to use FreeBSD after I graduated from NSU with a degree in mathematics in

1999, when I installed 3.2-RELEASE on my home desktop and started to use FreeBSD at work in an ISP environment (2.2.8-RELEASE). That was when I started to contribute to the FreeBSD Project by filing Problem Reports using GNATS (PR 15301 was my first one).

### How did you end up becoming a committer?

● In 2001, I created my first port, databases/libudbc (retired now), for Openlink Universal DataBase Connectivity SDK, which I used to connect a FreeBSD-based web server to a DEC RDB database running under VAX/OpenVMS. Since then I have been on the FreeBSD "Additional Contributors" list. In the meantime, I continued to employ FreeBSD in several ISP and other commercial environments. I even ran 64-bit FreeBSD 4.x/alpha for a time. Since then, I've filed about 340 PRs, submitting patches when I could. I think the number of my unclosed reports just reached critical mass so Vsevolod Stakhov and Andrej

Zverev offered me a promotion to ports commit bit and became my mentors. We talked about it on an IRC channel and I gratefully agreed.
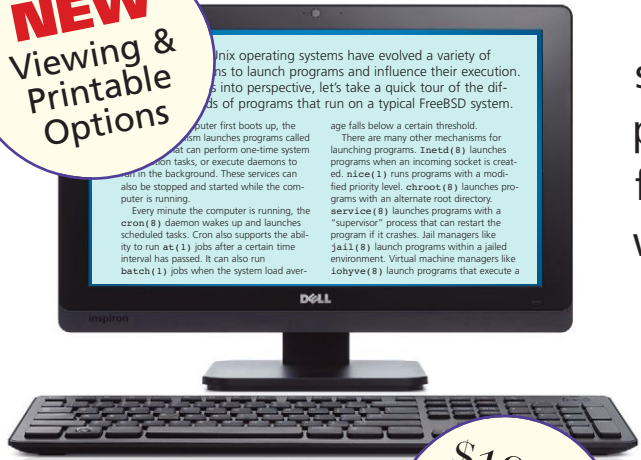
### How has your experience been since joining the FreeBSD Project? Do you have any advice for readers who may be interested in also becoming a FreeBSD committer?

● In spite of my history with the FreeBSD Project as a user and contributor, being a committer proved to be a different matter. There are a lot of things to be learned from the Committers Guide in regard to respecting other people's work and keeping the repository contents maintainable and consistent. But, it's lots of fun to see how you can make it better. ●

**DRU LAVIGNE** is a doc committer for the FreeBSD Project and Chair of the BSD Certification Group.