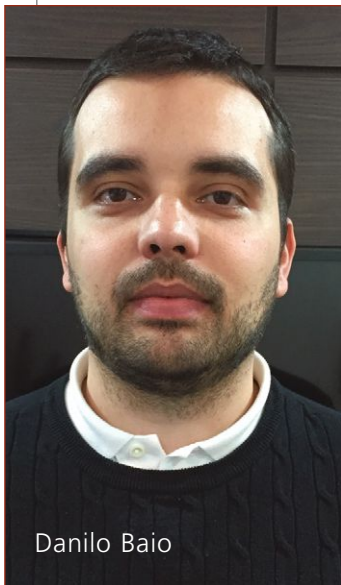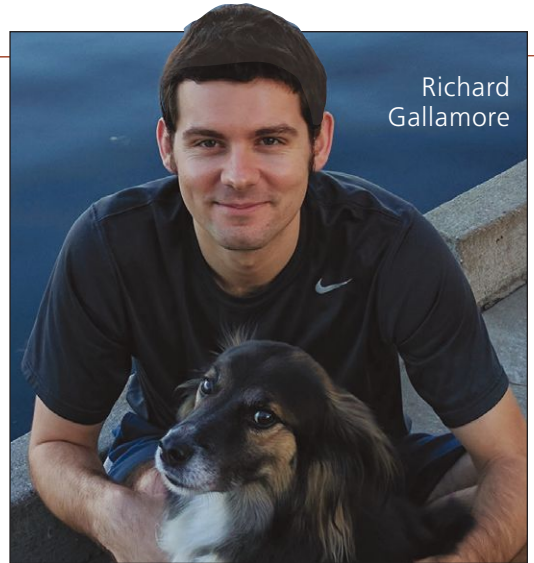# new faces

of FreeBSD BY DRU LAVIGNE

Richard Gallamore

This column shines a spotlight on contributors who recently received their commit bit and introduces them to the FreeBSD community. This month's spotlight is on Danilo Baio and Richard Gallamore, who each received a ports commit bit in May.

Danilo Baio

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

● Danilo: I am 31 years old and was born in Maringá, Paraná, Brazil. My family is from Marialva and I grew up there. I graduated in Information Systems in 2007 (UniCesumar) and after that I did some specialization in Network Computing (UEL) and IT Project Management (FCV).

I have been interested in computers since I was a kid, and became more comfortable in that area when I started working half-time in a small computer store for my father, and with my brother, who taught me about hardware.

Nowadays, I am not doing many sports, but in my adolescence I swam in state championships. I still really like swimming.

● Richard: My name is Richard Gallamore, and I was born in Kissimmee, Florida. I am 30 years old and have lived in Florida my entire life. I recently moved to San Francisco, California, to start my career in IT. As for my job, I'm currently in transition to my new career. Previously I worked with UPS for 11 years, 4 years as a driver. I also performed side jobs over the years, helping businesses get started and fixing any issues they might have with workstations or printers, and helping with other tasks such as administrating servers, websites, and other various services.

As for my background, well, this field has always been more of a hobby than a necessity. Most of my spare time has been dedicated to computer systems in some form or fashion. Around 2004/2005, I assembled my first computer, and that was quite an interesting experience.

Most of my knowledge came from buying components and learning what they do—creating an environment that I have no need for, but for the sole purpose of understanding how it works. I also often helped friends and family with the basics like networking, printers, and "my computer is running slow," etc. I touched Linux for the first time around 2007, but had few interactions and limited understanding.

Some of my other interests are: keeping systems updated, networking, security, food, Unix (obviously!), working out, or at least staying in shape. Virtual machines are always intriguing, and I absolutely love bhyve! On occasion, I enjoy a video game, though they rarely hold my interest.

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

● Danilo: After graduating, I started working at BS2 (ISP / Hosting), where I still work, dividing tasks

between BS2 and CRMall (Software Company).

My manager asked if I knew anything about FreeBSD. I said no, and he told me to take a look into it because at BS2 they were running several machines with FreeBSD.

I remember that the first thing that caught my attention was the organization: for instance, separating configuration files of the base system (/etc) from the packages installed through the ports (/usr/local/etc), and then the simplicity of upgrading your system, even major version upgrades.

I also liked the level of commitment of the developers and the Project in keeping the changes well documented and with no surprises for users. I heard about POLA (Principle of Least Astonishment https://www.freebsd.org/doc/handbook/freebsd-glossary.html#pola-glossary) a little before becoming a committer and it all makes sense.

• Richard: Well, in 2011 I decided I needed a storage machine and started using FreeNAS. At this time, I had no idea what FreeBSD was or even that FreeNAS was built on top of FreeBSD. After about a year of using FreeNAS, I got frustrated, because I wanted to use features FreeNAS didn't support or which needed a kernel rebuild, but I couldn't because I was using an older version of FreeBSD and rebuilding the kernel proved challenging on FreeNAS. I finally decided to transition to FreeBSD, and I never looked back!

I also want to note that FreeNAS is a good product and I'm not insulting the distro; it just did not fit my learning personality. FreeBSD in this respect is the perfect operating system for me. It is bare bones and the default install is configured to do almost nothing except the bare minimum to operate. So how does FreeBSD interest me? It suits my personality and knowledge which is a big win for me!

How did you end up becoming a committer?

• Danilo: In 2009, I watched a presentation by Renato Botelho (garga@) about VuXML (https://vuxml.freebsd.org/) and realized that a port we used at BS2 had a security issue. That's when I sent my first PR (https://bugs.freebsd.org/bugzilla/show_bug.cgi?id=141318).

After a few years, I started sending patches to update ports with frequency. After STAGEDIR support was introduced, ports that did not have

STAGEDIR support would be removed.

I also sent some contributions to the pfSense project, and in the middle of working between FreeBSD and pfSense, Renato asked me if he could propose my name for a commit bit. If I was accepted, he would be my mentor. This happened in May of this year and I am still learning more day by day.

• Richard: One of my interests has always been keeping systems and software up-to-date, obsessively and sometimes unnecessarily, probably more of an OCD problem. Around 2013/2014 I started learning more about ports, manually updating ports, and just building them. I came across a port called Seafile that was broken. I spent many hours trying to compile it and finally made it usable and wanted to update the port, but had no idea how any of that worked. Luckily, I found some help on iRC and was pushed in the right direction.

During this time, I built up my knowledge on FreeBSD. I was asked a couple of times by FreeBSD developers over this period if I was interested in becoming a committer, but I didn't really have the time due to working way too much and I just didn't think I was ready or had the knowledge for it.

Earlier this year, I finally concluded that I wasn't content with my current lifestyle and needed change. So, I decided to make a career change and moved to California. I messaged the committer who often committed my work, and here I am!

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?

• Danilo: I was welcomed by developers from all over the world. This was really cool, and most of them told me to have fun and that's what I'm doing.

I am now more amazed by the level of organization; any small detail matters, even if it is a simple keyword in bugzilla.

In each PR that I work on, I verify whether the contributor is registered in the Additional FreeBSD Contributors list (https://www.freebsd.org/doc/en/articles/contributors/contrib-additional.html). If not, I include them there to show that any contribution is important/relevant, and maybe in the future they could be a FreeBSD committer as well.

My advice for those who might be interested in

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becoming a committer is to always think of the other users before sending any patches. Think about whether it makes sense to most of the users or just to you.

Subscribe to the mailing lists related to your areas of interest and keep an eye on the FreeBSD Phabricator (https://reviews.freebsd.org/). There are a lot things going on there, and sometimes you learn something that is not yet in the Handbooks. Usually the mentoring work of new developers goes through there as well.

Also, contributors can submit revisions to Phabricator and then register a PR in bugzilla (http://bugs.freebsd.org/) to have their code committed. There's always a developer willing to take a look and make some comments.

Finally, keep sending patches, be patient, and do not get discouraged if it takes a while to get some feedback. If this happens, it does not mean that you did something wrong, just that the developers are busy or focused on other things, as usually everyone works in their spare time.

I participated in a PR (171246 for anyone who is interested) where this happened. It took seven months to be committed (by me) after becoming a committer.

● Richard: My experience since joining the FreeBSD Project has been great! There are many developers that are extremely knowledgeable.

One of the most important things on the path to becoming a committer is contributions. Not only actively contributing to the Project, but running QA and filling out bug reports completely. Writing a summary of why this patch is needed with the changelog linked or attached. Providing the report with the QA. Doing this shows that one cares about the work and is willing to go the extra mile. Over time it will be noticed and appreciated.

Being active on the mailing list or IRC is also a good way to learn more and help the community. ●

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

Thank you!

The FreesBSD Foundation would like to acknowledge the following companies for their continued support of the Project. Because of generous donations such as these we are able to continue moving the Project forward.

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