



# new faces

of FreeBSD BY DRU LAVIGNE



This column aims to shine a spotlight on contributors who recently received their commit bit and introduces them to the FreeBSD community. This month, the spotlight is on **Matt Joras**, who received his src commit in July.

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

I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a BS double major in computer science and physics. I've been working at Isilon since then on the networking team, mostly dealing with the FreeBSD networking stack. I'm interested in a lot of areas of the kernel, and I'm particularly interested (as a long-term goal) in improving/introducing new synchronization primitives into FreeBSD. I also run FreeBSD on my laptop and workstation, so I have a vested interest in improving that overall experience. Areas I think that are of particular importance are the WiFi stack, the Linux compatibility for DRM drivers, and laptop ACPI.

Outside of software, I enjoy hiking, listening to podcasts, following politics, reading fantasy/sci-fi, reading comics, hoarding data, birding, and partaking in the various hobbies my partner enjoys (most recently dog agility competitions).

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

I've known about the BSDs since I was a teenager running Linux and being generally immersed in the broader open-source community. I had always been skeptical of the GNU-style licenses and thought the BSDs afforded more practical freedoms.

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

Contributing to open-source projects is something I wanted to do since I started primarily using open-source software as a teenager. Back then I lacked the tenacity, confidence, and

expertise to contribute anything meaningful (or so I thought). Since I abandoned my dreams of being a physicist and decided to pursue software professionally, my ideal has always been to contribute to open source full-time. My job at Isilon isn't exactly that, but it formally introduced me to FreeBSD and allowed me to do work on it. I admired many of the people I work with that were already members of the community, and was enthusiastic to become a part of it.

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**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?**

People have been very welcoming! Overall, people are fairly responsive to communications, though it can be difficult to get certain things reviewed or get consensus on how best to fix something. I was extremely lucky in that I was gainfully employed somewhere that uses FreeBSD and has an interest in making the operating system better. If that weren't the case, it would have been much harder to feel as though I knew enough to contribute.

That being said, I think the best way to get involved is to use FreeBSD for as much of your computing as you can. This could be on your servers, your laptop, wherever. The experience is entirely usable, but you will inevitably find bugs and things that could be improved. You can study the relevant areas in the normal fashion, find the appropriate person in the community to get feedback (usually via mailing lists or PRs), and then develop your improvement. If you do this enough, someone will probably take notice and suggest you become a committer. ●

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