# 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.

In this installment, the spotlight is on Juraj Lutter, who received his ports bit in December 2020.

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

• Lutter: I was born in the former Czechoslovakia. My father is an electronics enthusiast and bought our first home computer (Sinclair ZX81), which was soon replaced by a more modern successor (ZX Spectrum). So as a boy, I got to know BASIC and later also the Z80 assembler. After the social changes that took place in our country in 1989, 16-bit computers, which were not available to private individuals until then, became more widespread in our country. This allowed me to get acquainted with DOS, PC hardware, Turbo Pascal, Turbo C, Turbo Assembler, and other tools.
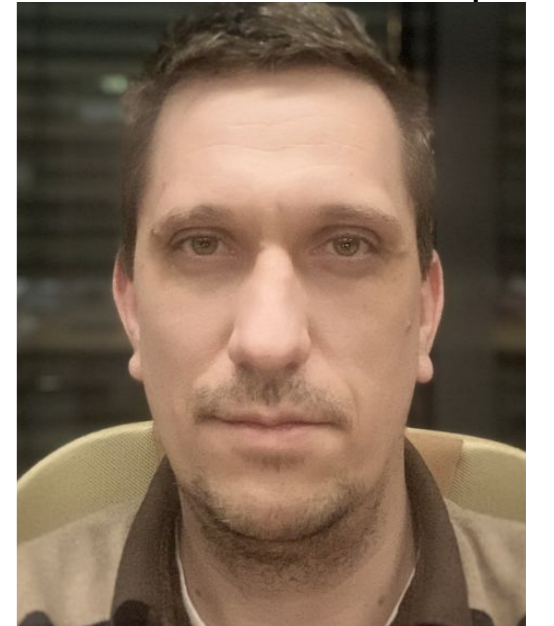
I have been in the IT industry since the late 1990s. First as a PC service technician, then as a system administrator at an ISP and as a freelancer, I have been working in the system integration industry. In addition to FreeBSD, where I maintain various ports, I am also interested in other open source technologies such as SmartOS and illumos, various infrastructure programs (BIND, PowerDNS, Zabbix), databases (PostgreSQL), computer networks (switching, routing, firewalling), and data storage (either monolithic storage or ZFS). I also have a commit bit to pkgsrc for SmartOS and NetBSD.

I collect old computers (especially 8-bit computers from Sinclair) and also devote some of my time to electrical engineering and electronics.

I live in our capital, Bratislava, and have two children—an 8-year-old son who is starting to discover Python and a 10-year-old daughter who is more sympathetic to the LUA language.

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

• Lutter: I first encountered UNIX around 1995, specifically SCO Unix 3.2, where one of my first tasks was to configure UUCP over an X.25 line. Shortly afterward, I received a 4-CD set from Walnut Creek CD-ROM that included among other things one of the first releases of Slackware Linux. And since I was already in contact with UNIX (SCO), I was interested in Linux because it was easy to install and use when compared to SCO UNIX. In my fourth year of high school in the fall of 1996, a classmate mentioned FreeBSD to me, and shortly thereafter I received my first user account on a FreeBSD server, which I used mainly for e-mail. Subsequently, around 1999, I started working as a system administrator in the Slovak branch of Nextra (Telenor Internet), where FreeBSD was deployed on several dozen

servers on i386 and Digital Alpha platforms and where we also had a Slovak FreeBSD mirror (www, ftp, CVSup).

FreeBSD fascinated me because, compared to Linux, it is a compact system, where the kernel and userland are in harmony and symbiosis, and where ports make it very easy to maintain software packages for different servers (for example, using poudriere). I also still maintain our local FreeBSD mirror.

How did you end up becoming a committer?

• Lutter: The more I used FreeBSD, the more I ran into bugs in individual ports and the base OS. Over time (since 2004), I started to open bug reports and contribute patches. It wasn't until the end of last year that I spoke to Sergey A. Osokin, to whom I mentioned that sometimes the bug reports I open remain unresolved for a long time and that I would also like to contribute to the development. Sergei suggested that he ask about it. And one day, I received mail in which René Ladan informed me that I had become part of the FreeBSD development community as a ports committer. I was really very pleased and honored. I want to thank Sergey for the opportunity join this amazing community and also Steve Wills for his help and answers to my curious questions.

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?

• Lutter: Since I've been contributing patches for a long time, I've seen how committers and the commit process works and how code reviews work (everyone who contributes should learn phabricator). And that's why my impressions are still positive. Thanks to constructive discussion, sharp edges can always be smoothed out and there are many things to learn from the more experienced committers and vice versa.

It is also a good idea to read (and eventually remember) the information in the Porter's Handbook and Committer's Guide. For example, I found a lot of information there about Subversion and the processes built on it (like MFH and the like).

DRU LAVIGNE is the author of *BSD Hacks* and *The Best of FreeBSD Basics*.