State of the Feather

Sam Ruby, President
Who am I?

Sam Ruby
• ASF President
• Assistant Secretary
• VP, Whimsy
Yes, the last one is a real title
Some statistics

• 5822 Committers
• 684 Members
• 181 PMCs
• 59 Podlings
• 96 Groups
A pretty graph
Agenda

- How we got here
- What we believe in
- How we are different
About this talk

• This isn’t another “the ASF is great” presentation where I will talk about how we do things differently/better than others.

• Instead, this is a talk where I identify what works and where there is more work that needs to be done.
About this talk

• This isn’t another “the ASF is great” presentation where I will talk about how we do things differently/better than others.
• Instead, this is a talk where I identify what works and where there is more work that needs to be done.
• … In fact, I’m going to do the talk backwards.
TL;DR

• We’ve been around for 18 years.
• We’re continuing to grow by every measure.
More importantly...

• We expect to continue to be around.
• We expect to continue to grow.
More importantly...

• We expect to continue to be around.
• We expect to continue to grow.
  • Perhaps even a bit too fast.
Our secret?

- Diversity
- Independence
- Openness
Excerpts from Incubation Exit Criteria

• Demonstrate an active and diverse development community
• There are at least 3 legally independent committers and there is no single company or entity that is vital to the success of the project
• Developed and executed in public
And we mean it
And we mean it

No one committer has any more say than any other committer as to what code is accepted.
And we mean it

No one PMC member has any more say than any other PMC member as to when a release is made.
And we mean it
All ASF member votes have equal weight.
And we mean it

No Director has any more ability to set policy than any other Director.
Concrete Example
Background

• I was the first non-Sun release manager for Tomcat.
• I’ve been here for 17 years.
• I’ve been a Director for 13 years.
• I’m an ASF Member.
• I currently hold the title of ASF President.
Current Status

• No longer active on that particular project.
• I am fully confident that I would be promptly and enthusiastically welcomed back should I decide to once again become active.
Current Status

• No longer active on that particular project.
• I am fully confident that I would be promptly and enthusiastically welcomed back should I decide to once again become active.
• … but only as an equal.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• We encounter BDFL wannabees in Incubation.
• We have PMCs wanting to release without votes.
• We have over-exuberant companies wanting to create press releases talking about their employee’s "leadership" when they become PMC chairs.
• We have grey beads asserting that new ideas aren’t the way things were done “back in the day”.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• All contributors are important.
• No contributor is irreplaceable.
I’m not saying it is easy…

• We have a business friendly license.
• We welcome and appreciate donations from generous sponsors.
• We have a strict vendor-neutral policy.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• 100 people planning 100 small conferences may work, but having 20 people planning one big conference doesn’t work as well.

• Letting a PMC have their own brand policy may affect other PMCs ability to enforce their mark.

• Having committers work on what they want to may work, but having sysadmins choosing only the fun tickets doesn’t.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• Sometimes the solution is to turn non-fun or time critical tasks into paid positions.

• While we have substantial financial reserves, we are currently running an unsustainable deficit.

• Expanding the pool of sponsors may run up to the question as to the “ROI” of the investment.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• But things that are worth doing aren’t always easy.
I’m not saying it is easy...

• But things that are worth doing aren’t always easy.

• And supporting the communities that have made the ASF a home is definitely worth doing.
Recapping our core values

• Diversity
• Independence
• Openness
Returning to our core values

• Diversity
• Independence
• Openness

… hopefully you now have more of an appreciation what we mean by these and why they are important to our longevity
Returning to our core values

• Diversity
• Independence
• Openness

… hopefully you now have more of an appreciation what we mean by these and why they are important to our longevity

… even when we have rare exceptions
Returning to the statistics

- 5822 Committers
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- 59 Podlings
- 96 Groups

... hopefully you now have more context for these numbers
And again with the pretty graph
And finally…

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