

(January 9th, 2012)

If you know someone who you think would benefit from being an Insider, feel free to forward this PDF to them so they can sign up [here](#).

Quick Tips for our Insider friends!

Hey Insiders!

Happy New Year! This bi-weekly Quick Tips is coming to you from Bali, Indonesia where we've escaped the winter blues of Seattle for a month to get some sun while we work on new class material, catch up on technical reading, and do a bit of diving. Some of the best diving in the world is in the Indo-Pacific and it's been 5 years since we were here last so we're looking forward to spotting some cool critters – especially frogfish and pygmy seahorses.

I already posted some photos of our travels through the mountains of Bali – see [here](#).

All our 2012 classes through August are now open for registration and the UK classes in May are filling up fast. This is our complete set of class deliveries for all 2012 with only one more likely delivery of IE1 & IE2 back-to-back later in the year. Check out the final part of the newsletter for details.

The most recent book I've read is Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteridge*. The book follows the life of an old, cranky woman who lives in a small town in Maine as she deals with various things in her life. It's told in series of short stories concerning Olive – sometimes directly about her and sometimes about people with which she's obliquely connected. It reminds me somewhat of the work of E. Annie Proulx (which I really like), but not as gritty. (Speaking of which, you should try Proulx's *The Shipping News* – fabulous book!) Olive's character is masterfully portrayed and I strongly recommend the book.

Finally, every year I blog about all the books I've read with a top-10 and links to Amazon – see [here](#) for the 2011 edition.

Please [let us know](#) if you liked what you read/saw here and/or have any suggestions for future Quick Tips.

Note: you can get all the prior Insider newsletters [here](#).

Paul's Ponderings

Continuing further from the last two newsletters which have been distinctly non-technical in nature, I want to wrap up my 'advice column' series by touching on learning.

As you all know, one of my passions in life is reading. I strike a good balance with the books I read between sci-fi, contemporary fiction, and history/historical fiction. I also read a lot of monthly magazines about photography, diving, travel, science, nature and robotics/electronics,

plus myriad blogs on all kinds of topics, obviously including a lot about SQL Server. (Kimberly always says she thinks I get up at night when she's asleep and do all this!)

Why? Because I have a thirst for learning about new things and I get bored if I don't have a huge number of things to do and think about. I've been through times in my life (remember the whole work-life balance story from the last newsletter when I was at Microsoft?) when it was all work, work, work and I'm sure I could feel my mind starting to stagnate – thinking about nothing except what I was working on. That's not good.

As the New Year has just rolled in, it's the perfect time to take stock of whether you spend any time learning about new things (especially about SQL Server – which is why you're reading this newsletter). There's always time to squeeze in just 15 minutes here and there to read a blog post, watch a video, or read a magazine article.

As far as SQL Server is concerned, you can learn by:

- Reading blog posts
- Picking a few features and studying them in [Books Online](#)
- Reading [SQL Server Magazine](#)
- Following forums on sites like [SQL Server Central](#)
- Attending free webcasts from the various [PASS Virtual Chapters](#)
- Attending [SQL Saturdays](#)
- Attending your local user group!
- And, of course, attending classes

Now, I'm not trying to write a thinly-veiled marketing statement for our classes as there are an enormous number of ways to learn about SQL Server for free as I've listed above – instead I'm trying to inspire you not to let your mind stagnate, which is so easy to do when one gets stuck in a work/life rut.

If your work/life balance is badly skewed, you'll likely feel you don't have time for learning – but learning about new things is one of the ways you can change your work/life balance, for instance, by learning from others how to automate mundane tasks to free you up for more learning. And that brings us back around to the first of these three newsletters I wrote back in December.

Call to action: Make a New Year's resolution to start (or continue) learning new things in 2012. Free your mind and push yourself! ☺

I'm really interested to know your thoughts on learning new things—feel free to [drop me a line](#), confidentially as always.

Video Demo

For this newsletter I invited Jonathan to record a video on a common problem he sees. He chose to show you how to troubleshoot common VM performance problems using the performance

counters available inside VMware – cool stuff! The demo video is about 15 minutes long and is recorded at high resolution (1440x1080).

I produced the video in WMV and MOV formats so everyone can watch. You can get the videos:

- For WMV: [here](#)
- For MOV: [here](#)

I recommend downloading before watching. No demo code this time.

SQLskills Offerings

Registrations are starting to come in for our 2012 classes. We have a full schedule planned for 2012 and so we've come up with an offer to help you use your 2011 training budget before you lose it. If you want to "buy in bulk" and pre-pay a block of seats now, you can get a 28% discount off of full price and a 16% off of the early-bird price. See [here](#) for details.

We are offering all of our Immersion Events in 2012 – these classes are available for registration now!

- February 27 – March 2, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Tampa, FL
- March 5-9, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Tampa, FL
- March 12-16, 2012: High Availability/Disaster Recovery (**IE3**) in Tampa, FL
- April 16-20, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Chicago, IL
- April 16-20, 2012: Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in Chicago, IL
- April 23-27, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Chicago, IL
- April 23-27, 2012: Developers (**IEDev**) in Chicago, IL
- May 7-11, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in London, UK
- May 7-11, 2012: Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in London, UK
- May 14-18, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in London, UK
- May 14-18, 2012: Developers (**IEDev**) in London, UK
- August 2012: **IE1-IE2-IE3-IE4, IEDev**, and **IEBI** in Redmond/Bellevue (WA) again!

NOTE: These are the **only** locations/classes/cities being planned from January through August 2012. We are likely to offer one more IE1 & IE2 combination later in the year.

See [here](#) for all the details.

Summary

We hope you've enjoyed this issue - we really enjoy putting these together.

If there is anything else you're interested in, we'd love to hear from you - [drop us a line](#).

Thanks,
Paul and Kimberly

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