(July 1st, 2020)

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

Note: As an Insider, you can read all prior Insider newsletters here.

Quick Tips for our Insider friends!

Hey Insiders,

This newsletter is coming to you from Redmond, where I'm starting a staycation for a bit of downtime in July – gardening, fishing, hobbies, and reading are all on the cards!

Tim and I are still helping people out using our six 3D printers to make mask straps that take pressure off of ears (see here) we've printed and shipped/donated more than 20,000 between us so far. We figure we'll be printing these through the end of the year. If you know anyone who could use some free straps, hit me or Tim up in email – don't be shy – I ship in units of 10s and 100s and I'm taking requests for shipments towards the middle of July.

Stay safe and healthy, and for all our American Insiders – Happy 4th of July this weekend!

SQLskills News

Live, ONLINE classes: our classes this year will all be online in September and October, as it's not feasible to run in-person classes for the foreseeable future. We're running them as a series of half-day sessions so it's less onerous then the usual 9-hour days in our in-person classes. Attendees will also get a recording of the entire class – something we've never done before!

- **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Junior/Accidental DBA
  - Half days on 9/14-17 plus 9/21-24
- **IEAzure**: Immersion Event on Azure SQL Database, Azure VMs, and Azure Managed Instance
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- **IECAG**: Immersion Event on Clustering and Availability Groups
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- **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1
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  - Half days on 10/19-23 plus 10/26-30

You can get all the details and registration information through the class schedule page here.

Kandio job candidate assessments: we've teamed up with Kandio to produce technical assessments to help companies screen candidates for job recruitment. If you want to make sure someone really knows what they say they know, check out the assessments here.

Online 2019 class recordings: you can buy recordings of all our three-day online classes from 2019, for as little as US$299 each. See here for all the details.

SQLBits: Kimberly, Erin, and I will all hopefully be presenting at SQLBits in September. Our precons are:

- Paul: Performance Troubleshooting using Waits and Latches SOLD OUT!!
- Erin: Performance Tuning with Query Store in SQL Server and Azure
- Kimberly: Statistics4Performance: Internals, Analysis, Problem Solving

SQLintersection: The Spring show has been canceled and everything has moved to the Fall show in Las Vegas in December. More details here nearer the time.

Finally, even if you can't join us in person, I've put out a call for **remote user group sessions for 2020!** If you'd like one of us to present for your user group, check out my blog post here.

Book Review

From the archives: Back in 2017 I read Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Schlosser's book is a searing exposé of the business practices behind the American fast food industry, focusing on McDonald's and the giant beef processing companies that supply it. Although written in 2001, the industry is still much the same today (not including those chains that create and cook their food fresh every day). The most shocking thing is really how the industry has pressured the government into reducing and/or removing safety and health inspections from the beef supply chain. Once you read about the meat processing facilities, I'll be surprised if you ever eat a frozen beef patty again. This is definitely not a go-vegetarian rant, but a level-headed, fact-based examination of how fast food is sourced, processed, and prepared. Highly recommended! (And I also strongly recommend Schlosser's *Command and Control* that I read a few years ago.)

The Curious Case of…

This section of the newsletter explains recent problems we've helped with on client systems; they might be something you're experiencing too.

Last week someone asked why they were seeing transaction log VLFs stay marked 'active' even though the log had cleared successfully. You can read through my explanation here…

Ponderings…

(From Paul this time – enjoy!)

At the start February in 2015 I started my mentoring "class of 2015" with 54 people and it took me about six weeks to digest all the information everyone sent me about themselves and what they want help with, and then kicking off individual mentoring plans.

One thing that came up again and again was that most of the people involved haven't had a formal mentor before. I found that very unfortunate, because having a good mentor is one of the coolest things that can happen during your career, and being a good mentor to someone is one of the most fulfilling things you can do in your career.

You may not think you'd be good as a mentor, but if you step back and think about all the things you've done in your professional life, all the people you've dealt with, job change decisions you've made, projects you've worked on, and just the sum total of all the experiences you've had, I think you'll find that you have more to offer as a mentor to someone than you might initially suppose.

Another thing to think about when considering being a mentor is that mentoring someone is also a way for you to grow yourself. It's a commitment to help someone, and you're responsible for giving good advice and helping them solve problems that they have. And don't just think technical mentoring – there are a huge number of areas where you can help someone outside of just answering technical questions and offering technical advice. I've found that non-technical mentoring is more fulfilling even than technical mentoring, to be honest, and the non-SQLskills mentoring I've done is all non-technical.

One of the questions I asked all my mentees back in 2015 was what they wanted help with and to help them I gave some suggestions, based on areas I'd helped people with over the prior 15 years or so (I didn't start non-technical mentoring until I joined Microsoft back in 1999). Here's the list:

- General career development
- Deciding whether or not to change jobs
- Becoming a consultant
- Résumé review and enhancement
- How to hire people
- Increasing influence
- Learning how to work with their manager
- Communication skills (e.g. writing emails, writing documents, writing clearly)
- Community exposure
- Value of certifications
- Managing a team

- Persuasion skills
- Questioning skills
- Dealing with stress and frustration
- Work/life balance
- Blogging
- Presentation skills and public speaking
- Time management
- Evaluating SQL Server skill set
- Goal setting
- Dealing with people
- Mentoring people

Now think of all the experiences you've had, and whether you'd be able to offer advice to someone on any of these subjects. I bet the answer is 'yes' to at least a few of them. And that means you'd be able to mentor someone who would benefit from your help.

Call to action: Consider mentoring someone. There's probably someone in your organization, in your group of friends, or in your local SQL Server community and online acquaintances who would love to have a mentor. Maybe talk to your user group about a mentoring-focused meeting and then having folks pair up? Or, just have the UG discuss issues as a whole? Consider getting a mentor. It doesn't matter how senior you may think you are; there are always areas where you can improve and benefit from the advice of someone else. As we're all mostly stuck at home this year, I'm strongly considering doing another round of community mentoring after my staycation ends – watch my blog…

#TBT

(Turn Back Time…) Blog posts we've published since the previous newsletter plus some older resources we've referred to recently that you may find useful.

Dealing with corruption is the theme for this TBT:

- My course: *[SQL Server: Detecting and Correcting Database Corruption](#)*
- My course: *[SQL Server: Advanced Corruption Recovery Techniques](#)*
- My blog post: *[SQLskills SQL101: Why DBCC CHECKDB can miss memory corruption](#)*
- My blog post: *[SQLskills SQL101: Dealing with SQL Server corruption](#)*
- My blog post: *[Disaster recovery 101: fixing a broken boot page](#)*
- My blog post: *[Corruption recovery using DBCC WRITEPAGE](#)*
- My *[Corruption](#)* blog post category

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

In this week's demo video, Jonathan takes a walk around the SQLCallstackResolver Github project including how you can use it to download SQL Server debugger symbols for any build of SQL Server from 2008 RTM through the current CU of 2019, how to generate PDB download PowerShell commands for newer releases of SQL Server, and how to materialize the call stacks using the symbol files without having to ever open up the debugger.

Link to the project: https://github.com/arvindshmicrosoft/SQLCallStackResolver/wiki/SQL-Server-2019.

Link to Paul's old blog post: https://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/paul/determine-causes-particular-wait-type/.

The video is around 8.5 minutes long and you can get it in WMV format here.

And the demo code is here.

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

Our 2020 classes have moved to be entirely online in September and October and are all open for registration!

You have multiple learning opportunities as every event has a different focus as well as different benefits – from deep-technical training in our Immersion Events to a more broad set of topics at SQLBits / SQLintersection! And, of course, one benefit you'll always get from in-person events is networking; we hope to meet/see you at an event soon!

To help your boss understand the importance of focused, technical training, we've also added a few items to help you justify spending your training dollars with us:

- Letter to your boss explaining why SQLskills training is worthwhile
- So why do you want to come to our training? And the winners are…
- Community blog posts about our classes
- Immersion Event FAQ

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Click here for the main Immersion Event Calendar page that allows you to drill through to each class for more details and registration links.

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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