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!

This newsletter comes to you from Redmond, where we're hunkered down working on new content and preparing for our spring classes, which are filling up nicely.

Take care and stay safe out there!

SQLskills News

Live, ONLINE classes in 2021: our classes this year will again be live-streamed online, as it's not feasible to run in-person classes for the foreseeable future. Just like our last deliveries, we'll be 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.

Students loved the split training days, from the comfort of watching in sweatpants to the ability to still get some of their regular duties accomplished. We had rave reviews for the format. And, all attendees of a live class receive lifetime streaming access to the recording of the entire class – something we'd never done before this year!

Our upcoming live, online classes for spring 2021 are as follows:

- **IEAzure**: Immersion Event on Azure SQL Database, Azure VMs, and Azure Managed Instance
    - February 23-24-25 and March 2-3-4, 2021
- **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1
    - March 15-16-17-18-19 and March 22-23-24-25-26, 2021
- **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2
    - April 12-13-14-15-16 and April 19-20-21-22-23, 2021
- **IEQS**: Immersion Event on Solving Common Performance Problems with Query Store
    - May 4-5-6, 2021
- **IEVLT**: Immersion Event on Very Large Tables: Optimizing Performance and Availability through Partitioning
    - May 17-18-19-20, 2021

These classes are available for registration individually or as part of a discounted bundle. You can get all the details on our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [new shop](#). However, before you buy, be sure to review all of the new options and discounts, we're very excited to offer our new Blackbelt Badge and Bundles**!**

NEW: Streaming recordings of all classes!

We've built a new system that allows you to buy streaming access to all our 2019 and 2020 class recordings. All classes are available for a complete year of access and a few heavily discounted courses for 90 days of access, plus you can purchase them individually or as part of a discounted bundle. You can get all the details in our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [new shop](#).

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](#).

Book Review

I am determined that the world will not suppress my reading passion any longer. The latest book I've read is Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way*. All four of Barry's novels I've read have been excellent. This one follows 18-year old Willie Dunne as he leaves his home and sweetheart in Dublin for the Western Front in WWI in 1914. He endures the horrors of the war alongside the other Irish lads with him, while at home the political tensions grow around Home Rule and the Easter Rising, which Willie gets caught up in while on furlough. It's a very powerful book and Barry does great job of making you visualize the scenes as you read. Highly recommended!

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.

The Curious Case blog post this week is also my Ponderings below – see [here](#).

Ponderings…

I came to a realization yesterday (Thursday) evening: I'm depressed.

Over the last month I've found myself sleeping really late, and having a hard time getting myself out of bed before noon most days (much to Kimberly's annoyance, as she gets up before 8 usually). I've also completely lacked motivation to do anything, including things I usually love, like reading, Lego, being outdoors, blogging.

As an example, back at the start of November I went on a book buying spree on Amazon, and when the boxes came, I wrapped them in Christmas wrapping paper and put them under the tree to surprise myself on Christmas Day. Six of the boxes, with who-knows what wonderful books in, are sitting behind my desk as I type this, still wrapped up. You all know how much I love books, and especially opening a box of new books – so this is really not normal.

So I did some research around lack of motivation as I was wondering if I was just being lazy. It turns out that if you have no motivation to do *anything*, not just things you don't like doing; it's a symptom of depression. Coupled with the not being able to get out of bed, no appetite, and finding myself constantly looking at the news when I'm at my laptop instead of working, it's definitely mild-moderate depression.

I don't *feel* depressed, with despair or dark thoughts – what I naively think of as how depression feels like – but I recognize it for what it is.

And I'm not surprised I guess. 2021 has been pretty crappy so far in my view. The pandemic is raging. The wild Capitol riot happened on January 6 and then the tumultuous two weeks after that leading up to the Inauguration. Gareth Swanepoel passed away on January 8, and then a second friend (wonderful dive master we've spent weeks diving with in Mexico over the last few years) passed away earlier this week. Two friends passing away in three weeks, and both from COVID-19 complications. That really knocked me for six (British phrase derived from cricket). I hope they're the only friends of mine that the world loses this year, but I suspect not unfortunately.

Why am I telling you this?

Because I think a lot of you out there may be experiencing something similar, and I want you to know that <u>you're not alone</u>. It's not a bad thing to admit. It's not weak. It can happen to anyone. And it can creep up on you unawares like it did to me. There's a lot going on in the world.

It's not something to ignore either. I happen to have the annual physical with my doctor in a few weeks and if things haven't improved (now I realize what's going on) then I'll talk to her about it.

So if you are feeling anything like me, talk to someone. For me, writing this up for the newsletter and posting on my blog has already made me feel better about it, and I hope being aware of it helps some of you too.

And tomorrow I'm going to open those book boxes!

#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.

Parallelism and CXPACKET waits is the theme for this TBT:

- My post: *Knee-Jerk Wait Statistics: CXPACKET*
- My post: *More on CXPACKET Waits: Skewed Parallelism*
- My post: *CXCONSUMER wait type – history and what you need to know*
- The waits library entry for *CXPACKET*
- Jonathan's post: *Tuning 'cost threshold for parallelism' from the Plan Cache*
- Jonathan's post: *SQL 101: Parallelism Inhibitors – Scalar User Defined Functions*
- My post: *Updated sys.dm_os_waiting_tasks script to add query DOP*
- My post: *Who is overriding MAXDOP 1 on the instance?*

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

<u>Video Demo</u>

In this Insider video, Tim continues the series of Azure-related videos by showing how to create an Azure SQL Database using the Azure Portal and SQL Server Management Studio. Each method offers a unique experience for selecting your tier size. Tim shows you the different service tier objectives for Azure SQL Database with a brief explanation of each. Azure is continually evolving and maturing and so is the tooling. If it's been a while since you've created an Azure SQL Database, then make sure to watch the video see what's changed.

The video is just over 7 minutes long and you can get it in WMV format here.

Enjoy!

<u>Upcoming SQLskills Events</u>

Our 2021 classes will be entirely online in the spring and they're open for registration!

With our new streaming system, you can now choose to attend a live, online event or purchase a recording to watch at your leisure, either individually or as part of a bundle. And all attendees of live events get lifetime access to the class recordings too!

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
- Community blog posts about our classes
- Immersion Event FAQ

LIVE, Online Immersion Events:

Spring 2021

- **IEAzure**: Immersion Event on Azure SQL Database, Azure VMs, and Azure Managed Instance
  - February 23-24-25 and March 2-3-4, 2021
- **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1
  - March 15-16-17-18-19 and March 22-23-24-25-26, 2021
- **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2
  - April 12-13-14-15-16 and April 19-20-21-22-23, 2021
- **IEQS**: Immersion Event on Solving Common Performance Problems with Query Store
  - May 4-5-6, 2021
- **IEVLT**: Immersion Event on Very Large Tables: Optimizing Performance and Availability through Partitioning
  - May 17-18-19-20, 2021

You can get all the details on our training options page or just go directly to our new shop.

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

Paul@SQLskills.com and Kimberly@SQLskills.com