

(January 3rd, 2024)

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!

Happy New Year! I hope 2024 is better for you than 2023, and that you all had an excellent holiday season!

In case you missed the announcements late last year, Kimberly has [officially retired](#) from technology and handed over the reins of SQLskills completely to me! She's not quite done yet though, in fact she's on the hook for the next Blackbelt Base Camp [session on IEVLT on 1/16](#).

If you're not already a Blackbelt subscriber, hit me up on [email](#) before 1/16 and I'll give you the Black Friday sale prices!

- **One-year access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$995**
- ***Lifetime* access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$1,999**

If you've already purchased the Blackbelt bundle once, purchase the one-year access and I'll convert your existing access into Lifetime, by removing all the expiration dates.

Blackbelt Base Camp

We know that finding time for training is difficult in and of itself. Add "recorded courses" and some people just can't stay motivated. Or, their offices don't give them time. Or, you think, you'll have lingering questions that will go unanswered. Or, there's just no schedule or forcing factor to keep you going (ok, the badges are cool but you still have to be motivated to finish the courses). And, it's not just about *finishing* the courses; it's about LEARNING.

So, we came up with a plan to help you! We've called it Blackbelt Base Camp – Class of 2024. It started in October 2023 and runs through June 2024, we will have required course materials each week to review. Each week will represent roughly 1 full day of training. We recommend that you set aside 2 hours per day (same time every day or you pick!). But, we want you to **BLOCK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR**. We want you to get sign-off from your manager. We want you to be able to **LEARN** – effectively. If you're constantly being interrupted, you won't retain the content. However, if you can focus – for just 2 hours a day – you can truly absorb the content

and help make it stick! Furthermore, at the end of each course, we will have an open Q&A with at least 2 SMEs (Subject Matter Experts) on hand to cover any of your remaining questions!

The full schedule is [here](#). They're all recorded and as a Blackbelt subscriber you'll have access to them all.

We look forward to helping you get to Base Camp, get your Blackbelt, and improve your SQL skills!

Book Review

One of the last books I read in 2023 was Oscar Wilde's [The Picture of Dorian Gray](#). It's another classic that I've always wanted to read, and the Audible production of it was excellent. It's a brilliant book with absolutely superb writing, and is probably the best book I've read all year. From Amazon: "Enthralled by his own exquisite portrait, Dorian Gray makes a Faustian bargain to sell his soul in exchange for eternal youth and beauty. Under the influence of Lord Henry Wotton, he is drawn into a corrupt double life, where he is able to indulge his desires while remaining a gentleman in the eyes of polite society. Only Dorian's picture bears the traces of his decadence. A knowing account of a secret life and an analysis of the darker side of late Victorian society, The Picture of Dorian Gray offers a disturbing portrait of an individual coming face to face with the reality of his soul. Shocking in its suggestion of unspeakable sin, this novel was later used as evidence against Wilde when he was tried for indecency in 1895." Highly, highly recommended!

The Curious Case of...

This section of the newsletter explains recent problems we've helped with on client systems or been asked about over email or #sqlhelp; they might be something you're experiencing too.

I had this question come through in email over the holidays from a new DBA: why does your wait statistics script filter out a bunch of wait types? You can read through my explanation [here](#)...

Ponderings...

(This editorial is adapted from my traditional first-newsletter-of-the-year editorial that I've been doing since 2014.)

At the start of every New Year it's always tempting to come up with a series of resolutions about things you're going to start doing, and it's tempting for me to write an editorial about planning to do new things. It's really easy to come up with ideas for cool things to *start* doing, which is why it's the easy route to take at the start of a new year.

But before you go too crazy with new ideas, consider a post mortem of your goals and plans from 2023. Look back at the year and see what didn't go well, and then figure out how to improve on those things. In my opinion, that's going to have a more positive effect on your life than continuing to do poorly on those things, and also try to add new things as well. (From 2014 to 2016, Kimberly commented *"the SQL development team could learn from this too..."*, but with SQL Server 2016 and later versions, they really have been going back and fixing a bunch of things that were broken or outdated.)

During 2015, one of the things I had reinforced through the year while I mentored folks in the SQL community is that **everyone** has something with which they need help or advice, and I continue to swap emails with a few mentees when they ask for advice (in the years since 2015). I did the same thing with my 2020 mentees (who I mentored through 2021 too), plus with some of my 2023 mentees. I strongly advise you to get a mentor outside your management chain (and preferably outside your company) – someone to whom you can bounce questions and one that has no vested interest – other than just helping you out.

And I'm not just talking about things in your work life; I'm also talking about things in your personal life. Here are some examples of things to think about and consider improving upon for 2024:

- Your work/life balance
- The support your immediate manager gave you
- Your interactions with some of your colleagues
- Your interest in some aspects of your job
- Your career/skills development
- Resistance to change
- Keeping on top of performance fires
- Keeping track of goals and to-do lists
- Saying 'no' when you're already overloaded
- Accepting a poor status quo at work instead of looking for a better job
- Finding time for disaster recovery planning/testing
- Finding time for all the little things that it's easy to procrastinate about
- Finding time for your hobbies
- Finding time and motivation to become/stay healthy (I got my drinking under control back in March 2023 finally)
- Keeping in touch with old friends and distant family
- Finding time to read some books or learn something new that's non-work
- Your work/life balance (again, because it's **so** important)

All of these can cause significant amounts of stress, so fixing them should be the first priority. Only once you have these items fixed, should you embark upon new and additional goals!

Call to action: Before you set cool, new goals for 2024 (whether at work or at home), do a post-mortem and work to fix the stuff from 2023 that was broken or didn't go so well. Not only will it feel good but it'll also reduce stress. And try to get a mentor!

#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.

Wait stats are the theme for #TBT this time. Here are some wait statistics resources for you:

- My Pluralsight: [SQL Server: Performance Troubleshooting Using Wait Statistics](#), that has 4.5 hours covering waits, latches, and spinlocks
- My main post about [wait statistics](#)
- My [wait stats library](#) with info on more than 360 wait types
- The [introductory whitepaper](#) Jonathan and Erin wrote
- Microsoft advanced whitepapers I helped to produce:
 - [Diagnose and Resolve Latch Contention on SQL Server](#)
 - [Diagnose and Resolve Spinlock Contention on SQL Server](#)
- My three blog post series on [waits](#), [latches](#), and [spinlocks](#)
 - Our articles on SentryOne's [sqlperformance.com](#) about wait statistics

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

And continuing with the wait statistics theme for this newsletter, here's a demo from Tim's Pluralsight course *SQL Server: Understanding and Using Azure SQL Database*. In the demo, Tim shows how to change my scripts for capturing wait statistics and I/O statistics so they work on Azure SQL Database.

The video is just under 3 minutes long and you can get it in MP4 format [here](#).

The demo code is available [here](#).

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

BlackBelt Base Camp – Started in October 2023

We've decided to record SQL Server 2022 updates relevant to our class material rather than running full classes, as, to be honest, not much has changed in our space and 2022 focused a lot on Azure extensions. These are done as part of our Blackbelt Base Camp series.

With our 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](#)

You can get all the details on our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [shop](#).

Summary

I hope you've enjoyed this issue – I really enjoy putting these together. If there's anything else you're interested in, I'd love to hear from you - [drop me a line](#).

Thanks,

Paul

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