

(March 20th, 2025)

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!

Spring is the traditional time for cleaning and going through cupboards to get rid of old stuff that isn't needed any longer. Well, for us, it's going through our whole house and garage sorting through 20+ years of accumulated hobbies, dive gear, books, games, tools, you-name-it – it's a daunting task as we rationalize everything in preparation for moving up north to our new property.

Spring is also the time of new beginnings, and what better way to prepare for the year ahead than improving your SQL Server skills...

Spring Blackbelt Sale!

Spring starts today and we have a sale on through the end of March on our signature [Blackbelt bundle](#) with more than 158 hours of top-quality training (plus all our SQL Server 2022 update/Q&A recordings):

- **One-year access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$990**
 - If you already bought a one-year access, buy another and I'll convert it to lifetime access
- ***Lifetime* access to the Blackbelt bundle: US\$1,895**

You can buy directly [on the website](#) or [contact me](#) if you'd like to use a PO/invoice or if you'd like to inquire about a bulk-purchase discount.

Catch up on PASS Summit 2024 On-demand

[PASS Summit on-demand](#) grants you access to hundreds of high-quality sessions across all 5 tracks at PASS Summit 2024.

Why buy PASS Summit on-demand access?

- Get a front row seat to hundreds of high-quality [sessions](#) on-demand
- Re-watch sessions from your favorite speakers anytime, anywhere, until **October 31, 2025**

- A cost-effective way to learn from industry experts

[Buy your access](#) for \$1,295 and make 2025 the year you level up your learning.

Book Review

Here are a couple of reviews of excellent books I've read since the last newsletter...

Firstly, [*Dopamine Nation: Finding Balance in the Age of Indulgence*](#) by Anna Lembke. Extremely interesting book about finding the balance with things that are addictive - definitely useful for me! Highly recommended! From Amazon: "This book is about pleasure. It's also about pain. Most important, it's about how to find the delicate balance between the two, and why now more than ever finding balance is essential. We're living in a time of unprecedented access to high-reward, high-dopamine stimuli: drugs, food, news, gambling, shopping, gaming, texting, sexting, Facebooking, Instagramming, YouTubing, tweeting . . . The increased numbers, variety, and potency is staggering. The smartphone is the modern-day hypodermic needle, delivering digital dopamine 24/7 for a wired generation. As such we've all become vulnerable to compulsive overconsumption. In *Dopamine Nation*, Dr. Anna Lembke, psychiatrist and author, explores the exciting new scientific discoveries that explain why the relentless pursuit of pleasure leads to pain . . . and what to do about it. Condensing complex neuroscience into easy-to-understand metaphors, Lembke illustrates how finding contentment and connectedness means keeping dopamine in check. The lived experiences of her patients are the gripping fabric of her narrative. Their riveting stories of suffering and redemption give us all hope for managing our consumption and transforming our lives. In essence, *Dopamine Nation* shows that the secret to finding balance is combining the science of desire with the wisdom of recovery."

Secondly, [*Recoding America: Why Government Is Failing in the Digital Age and How We Can Do Better*](#) by Jennifer Pahlka. Excellent book explaining why our government at all levels tends to be terrible at IT projects. I'm sure many of you will relate to some of the issues highlighted in the book. Highly recommended! From Amazon: "Just when we most need our government to work—to decarbonize our infrastructure and economy, to help the vulnerable through a pandemic, to defend ourselves against global threats—it is faltering. Government at all levels has limped into the digital age, offering online services that can feel even more cumbersome than the paperwork that preceded them and widening the gap between the policy outcomes we intend and what we get. But it's not more money or more tech we need. Government is hamstrung by a rigid, industrial-era culture, in which elites dictate policy from on high, disconnected from and too often disdainful of the details of implementation. Lofty goals morph unrecognizably as they cascade through a complex hierarchy. But there is an approach taking hold that keeps pace with today's world and reclaims government for the people it is supposed to serve. Jennifer Pahlka shows why we must stop trying to move the government we have today onto new technology and instead consider what it would mean to truly recode American government."

Ponderings...

In the intro section I mentioned that Kimberly and I are going top-to-bottom through our house, de-cluttering and getting rid of things we don't use or need, so we can minimize how much we need to pack and move then store or unpack when we move from Redmond up to Concrete later this year.

One of my problems is that I have a lot of hobbies, or hobbies that I want to have – I'm what is known as a 'hobby collector'. This is someone who likes to jump from hobby to hobby, diving deeply into the new hobby and then sometimes giving it up and jumping to something else new. It's definitely a neuro-divergent trait, which I freely admit.

Here's a list of my hobbies (those with a * are my main ones I do daily or multiple times/week):

- Astronomy
- Arduino
- Robot arms
- Drones
- Building 8-bit computers
- Building electronics kits
- Electronics in general
- *Chess
- *Reading
- *US stamp collecting (stamps, plate blocks, souvenir sheets, full sheets)
- World stamp collecting (mainly miniature/souvenir sheets)
- US coin collecting
- Model ship building (wooden)
- Model helicopter making (plastic)
- Lego and Lego knock-offs
- Gardening
- Growing vegetables
- Cross-stich
- Crochet
- Oil painting by numbers
- Painting with Diamonds
- Metal models
- Blacksmithing and smelting
- Welding
- Bonfires and firewood
- Bird watching

- Geocaching
- Fishing
- *Online auctions
- *Cats
- Guns and shooting (not hunting)
- *Online games
- Using big machines (tractor/excavator/dozer etc)
- Diving
- Travel
- Road trips
- History
- Cooking
- Sous vide
- Smoking meat and fish
- 3-d printing
- *Crypto investing
- *Non-alcoholic ‘spirits’ and mocktails
- *News and geopolitics
- Rock tumbling and polishing
- Model railways

As you can see, I have way more hobbies that I can possibly fit into my life with any regularity, so many of them languish, sometimes for years at a time. And who knows what I’ll discover this year and get into?

I imagine that many of you have a similar ‘problem’ with your work – many, many diverse responsibilities and not enough time to do more than a handful justice. But I have my big list by choice, whereas I’m sure most of you do not.

Being overloaded with responsibilities at work leads to stress, ‘paralysis’, things falling through the cracks – especially in an environment that constantly fighting performance fires. It’s not healthy, and not conducive to a stable, well-ordered SQL Server environment.

What can you do?

- Prioritize and schedule time for lower priority things so they don’t permanently fall to the end of the list
- Delegate or redistribute responsibilities across your team
- Push-back to management
- Worst case: look for a new job

And me? I think it's time to cut loose some hobbies that I've collected and won't really have time to do anytime soon!

The Curious Case of...

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

Over the last few months we've had some clients discuss backup strategy with us, and we always say not to plan a backup strategy. "Uh, what?" you're thinking... Read about the right way to do it in Jon's blog post [here](#)...

#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

To go with the #TBT above I've pulled a demo from my Pluralsight course [SQL Server: Advanced Corruption Recovery Techniques](#). In the demo, I show how to recover data that will be lost from a corrupt clustered index from nonclustered indexes *before* running repair.

The video is about 7.5 minutes long and you can get it in WMV format [here](#).

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

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

Given how little changed with SQL Server 2022, we decided to record a series of updates relevant to our class material during 2023 and 2024 rather than running full classes. These were done as part of our Blackbelt Base Camp series and are available in our shop, and are free with a Blackbelt bundle. We have no plans for live, public classes in 2025.

With our streaming system, you can 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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