

(March 30th, 2026)

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!

It has begun! Kimberly and I have started moving our household from Redmond up to Camp Savage, now that we have all our storage with working HVAC and security. Talking of security, check out my ponderings, with a bunch of things for you to consider, and Jon's Curious Case about TDE and encrypted data protection.

And the big news is.... last day of the March Madness \$699 Blackbelt Bundle sale!

SQLskills News

Our signature Blackbelt Bundle is hundreds of dollars off our lowest price:

- **\$699 for one-year access**
- **\$1,299 for Lifetime access**

If you have an existing or expired Blackbelt bundle, you can resurrect it and convert to Lifetime access with the \$699 purchase. Both bundles include the SQL Server 2022 updates and Q&A sessions, for almost 170-hours of content. Shop [here](#)!

Joe's two new courses are streaming now at a screen near you!



(Hint, hint – in their podcasts, Kimberly and Joe mention the discount code ‘podmarch’, which gets you 50% off! Send this to your devs so they can consider vector search prototyping now!)

The courses cover SQL Server 2025’s vector search functionality, fundamentals first and then real-world practical scenarios and production solutions. They’re available singly or in a bundle, and the discount code ‘newsai’ will save you \$50 off either course. Check them out, each with a long video trailer: [AIVSE](#) [AIVSP](#)!

Kimberly and AIJoe continue their video podcast with 11 available so far – watch them [here](#).

Joe’s also available for Proof-of-Concept, evaluation, and general consulting work around vector search. If you’re interested, let us know [here](#)!

Book Review

Two books for you this time, both starting long series...

The first is Jim Butcher’s *Storm Front* (start of series of 18, so far...) I picked this up on a whim after reading a 'best fantasy series' article that mentioned the Dresden Files. Harry Dresden is a modern-day wizard in Chicago who's also a private eye - so it's a cross between detective-mystery-action and fantasy-magic. Actually pretty good and I'll get the series set later this year once I've worked into several other series I'm starting. Quick read, entertaining, escapism - highly recommended!

The second is James Nelson’s *Fin Gall* (start of a series of 12) Another Viking saga (I also finished Bernard Cornwell’s epic *The Last Kingdom* series in February), and this time set in Dublin (Dubh Linn), a city I know and love in the present day. Plot: Viking stuff happens! LOL.

I'd originally bought the three-book series in 2017 and didn't want to buy the upcoming fourth until I'd read one. Went to buy it on Amazon and now there are 12! So bought 4-6. Great stuff and highly recommended!

Ponderings...

Back in 2017, a Dutch hosting company called Verelox was nearly destroyed by a disgruntled ex-administrator who was able to wipe their servers clean (details here on [BleepingComputer](#)). It looks like the administrator was still able to access his/her account after leaving the company.

If this was the case, that's inexcusable laxity on their part as far as I'm concerned. In today's world, where black-hat hackers from across the world are constantly trying to penetrate the I.T. infrastructure of companies, keeping on top of potential security problems is vital. No former employee should still have an active account, especially not one with administrator privileges!

And of course the same goes for the SQL Server infrastructure at your company.

Any time a security scare happens, it's a good reminder that SQL Server has security considerations that need to be addressed. Here's a list of things you need to consider:

- Physical security of your servers (can someone walk away with a server or storage?)
- Network security (Windows security, firewalls, encryption, Kerberos, using SQL Browser)
- Attack surface minimization (disabling unused features so they're not available for hackers to attempt to subvert)
- Service accounts (using accounts with the least privileges possible to reduce the likelihood that a compromised account can lead to a wholesale network penetration)
- Restricting use of admin privileges (only those people who *really* need admin rights should have them)
- Authentication mode (whether to allow SQL Server authentication as well as or in place of Windows authentication)
- Authorization (using the principle of least privilege to prevent unnecessary access to data and functionality)
- SQL injection (making sure that dynamic SQL isn't susceptible to attacks that inject escape characters to circumvent security)
- Disaster recovery (ensuring that encrypted data can be properly accessed after performing disaster recovery, e.g. can you restore encryption keys? See the Curious Case below!)
- Auditing (making sure you know who's doing what, both unsuccessfully and successfully)
- Ensuring that no prior employees have active security credentials for the infrastructure

I wrote a long article for TechNet Magazine back in 2009 that discusses each of these points in more depth, with links to further information. Although the article is pretty old, the information is still current and applicable to all versions of SQL Server. Check it out [here](#).

I also wrote a newsletter editorial in [August 2015](#) about social engineering and the susceptibility of employees to phishing emails that could lead to a security breach – see [here](#).

Call to action: If you're responsible for databases that contain any information that you don't want someone to have unauthorized access to, you need to make sure that your security doesn't have any problems. You never know when someone's going to take aim at your infrastructure.

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.

Jonathan's had many requests for how to protect encrypted data in a TDE-enabled database, and last week's request was the straw that broke the camel's back and prompted him to write a blog post instead of an email reply. You can read all about it [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.

The theme for the TBT this time is log shipping. It's been around forever, is simple to configure, and has a bunch of uses. Here are some useful links:

- Pluralsight course: [SQL Server: Understanding, Configuring and Troubleshooting Log Shipping](#)
- Whitepapers:
 - [Migration Guide: Migrating to AlwaysOn Availability Groups from Prior Deployments Combining Database Mirroring and Log Shipping](#)
 - [Proven SQL Server Architectures for High Availability and Disaster Recovery](#) (written by me)
 - [Database Mirroring and Log Shipping Working Together](#)
- [Log Shipping](#) in Books Online
- Blog posts:
 - Paul: [SQLskills SQL101: Log shipping performance problems](#)
 - Glenn: [Upgrading SQL Server–Migrating with Log Shipping](#)

And some of my recent blog posts:

- [SQL101: Top Ten SQL Server Performance Tuning Best Practices](#)
- [The Curious Case of... no buffer pool memory and no OS memory available](#)

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

The demo video this time is from the Pluralsight course mentioned above ([SQL Server: Understanding, Configuring and Troubleshooting Log Shipping](#)) and shows how simple it is to configure log shipping using Management Studio.

The video is five minutes long and you can get it in MOV format [here](#).

No demo code this time.

Enjoy!

SQLskills Training

We have no plans for live, public classes in 2026, but we've already released the first of many new courses coming over the next year! And of course, all our recorded courses from the last few years are still as relevant as ever.

To help your manager 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 manager explaining why SQLskills training is worthwhile](#)
- [Community blog posts about our classes](#)

You can get all the details in 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