

(August 5th, 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!

This is newsletter #300! The very first one was only a single page of content (a three-paragraph Ponderings and a demo video) and now I've been producing them for more than 15 years, with the first one published in March 2011 – how time seems to fly!

It's been a month since the last newsletter because I've been so busy working on our house and moving stuff up to Camp Savage. The light is as at the end of the tunnel though – listing next week finally – phew!

Talking of light, right now the light is hazy at CS (image from this morning) because of all the wildfire smoke from eastern WA – our youngest daughter is at law school in Spokane and was caught up in the emergency evacuations last weekend – scary stuff!



PASS Data Summit Workshop

I'm excited to be presenting at the Pass Summit in November! My pre-con workshop is my absolute favorite to teach *Performance Tuning with Waits and Latches* and I'll also be presenting a session on *Advanced Data Recovery Techniques*. Bonus is that I'll have Kimberly with me!

All the details are available on the [Pass Summit website](#). See you there!

Book Review

The most recent book I've read (well, listened to) is Doris Kearns Goodwin's [*The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt and the Golden Age of Journalism*](#). What a fabulous book! Basically part-biographies and political histories of both Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft (ticking off two presidents for me), plus the history of the McClure's magazine and its brilliant journalists like Tarbell, Steffens, White, and Baker - the original muckrakers. Huge, at more than 900 pages/35 hours, written to keep you entranced, and with just the right level of detail. Highly, highly recommended!

Last year I also read Goodwin's [*Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*](#). I bought this in 2012 and decided to listen to it instead after listening to [*Gone With the Wind*](#) (set in the same time). Fantastically interesting book about Lincoln, his nomination, his cabinet, and his prosecution of the Civil War. An amazing politician and juggler of political rivals. Highly, highly recommended!

Ponderings...

I was torn between a “reflections on 15 years” and a “mental health” ponderings for the 300th edition, so here's a bit of both – blasted out in a half-hour brain dump.

The world has become a very noisy, uncaring, impolite place. I have misophonia, a very low tolerance for nonsense (in a less polite setting I'd say b***s**t or f***ery), and a deep, deep dislike of phones, small-talk, or interruptions. So all these things, that have become ubiquitous over the last 15 years, are most irritating:

- Cell phones that ‘ding’ constantly
- People having speakerphone conversations in stores, planes, restaurants
- Constant spam texts and calls – the FTC do-not-call list is a joke
- Sensationalist news
- People in such a rush that they tail-gate, weave through traffic, and generally drive dangerously
- Anything to do with our dysfunctional politics (and likely in your country too, if not in the US)
- Entitlement and inconsideration when traveling
- Neighbors letting dogs bark, bark, bark, bark at all times of day and evening
- The seeming lack of pride and professionalism in many service industries
- People letting their kids run wild in restaurants
- The disappearance of basic politeness like saying please and thank you
- And more

Am I just an angry old (oldish, ok? only 54!) man? No, I've been writing about some of these things since 2011 (see <https://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/paul/the-golden-rule-maybe-just-optional-now/>). But I am much more intolerant and now that I've slowed down since the pandemic I notice these things a lot more.

And they grate and grind and oppress. Which is why I enjoy being at Camp Savage so much – no people, noise, traffic, travel – just lots of nature. Am I wandering off into the woods to bury my head in the sand and live in a shack? Well, kind of lol! Part of our Camp Savage move is to get out of the city, the rat-race, the noise and pollution, and live a healthier, happier life with lots of open space, animals, greenhouses, and so on.

That's the mental health part. Well, and stopping drinking 18 months ago – that was life-changing, obviously. It's taken 18 months for my brain to rewire itself.

What about SQL Server? Well, if you think about the bits that I'm interested in, not a whole lot has changed. Sure, there are new, impactful features like columnstore, AGs, query store, ADR, but when it comes down to it, what I'm interested in, consult on, and teach hasn't really changed. People still need to:

- Figure out where performance is a problem and then fix it
- Have a disaster recovery plan that works
- Implement high availability
- Understand some of how the engine works
- Use indexes correctly
- Communicate well (by far the most popular of all our Pluralsight courses!)

I'm often asked if I'm concerned about cloud or AI meaning DBAs will be out of a job or SQL skills will become irrelevant. We have many clients who have no interest in Azure (either from security, performance, scalability, or just basic trust issues). We also have a bunch who do use the cloud in some way, but it's not going to become a zero-on-prem game. AI is in no way ready to replace DBAs – plenty of stories out there of AI doing the wrong thing, the explicitly 'do not do that' thing, or going rogue. And AIs are only as good as what they're trained on and who they're trained by. I've seen some horrible answers to test questions I've asked AI engines.

So my answer is a big, fat 'no'. Not concerned. We're still here, and hopefully will still be for many years to come. Quietly 😊

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 weekend I was asked about the possibility of recovering from a ransomware attack given encrypted SQL Server files. I said there's no point wasting their money with me looking at encrypted files and they really have two choices: pay the ransom or decide to accept work/data/business loss and go back to an earlier backup, if available. Even if a third-party company can attempt to decrypt the ransomed files, I've never seen a successful recovery. You can read through my explanation [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 #TBT is communication skills, so here are some resources for you:

- My Pluralsight course on [*Communications: How to Talk, Write, Present, and Get Ahead!*](#) that has 2 hours covering skills for communicating, running and attending meetings, all forms of writing from emails to articles, and how to write and deliver presentations. (reworked and rerecorded in 2023)
- And a bunch of blog posts:
 - [*Public Speaking: A Primer*](#)
 - [*Ignorance is not stupidity*](#)
 - [*It depends. It really, really does.*](#)
 - [*RTFM. No seriously, R.T.F.M. Then ask your question.*](#)
 - [*Learning to listen*](#)
 - [*How to ask questions politely and correctly*](#)
 - [*How to answer questions politely and correctly*](#)

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

In this video, Jonathan continues with the tempdb space governance configuration options in SQL Server 2025 and demonstrates some of the nuances of percent size limits.

The video is 7.5 minutes long and you can get it in MP4 format [here](#).

The demo code is [here](#).

Enjoy!

SQLskills Training

We have no plans for live, public classes in 2026, but we've already released two new courses this 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