

# Inner Monologue

July 2026

Issue 45

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1  
Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.  
Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.  
No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.  
Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be added within the United States, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including all bound Persons for Service or Labour, and excluding all Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as the Congress may direct.  
The House of Representatives shall have at least one Representative from each State.  
Thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative.  
When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive thereof may by writ of Habeas Corpus fill such Vacancies.  
The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for a Term of six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.  
Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the Election, they shall be divided in three Clases, so that one third may be chosen, renewed, or added, in each Year.  
The Clases shall be as follows: The Names of the Senators in the first Clase shall be, in the first Year, Virginia, New York, and North Carolina; in the second Year, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; in the third Year, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.  
No Senator shall be chosen, who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, be seven Years a Citizen of that State for which he shall be chosen.  
The Clases shall be as follows: The Names of the Senators in the first Clase shall be, in the first Year, Virginia, New York, and North Carolina; in the second Year, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; in the third Year, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

## This Issue:

Essay: "Our Enduring Constitution"

News & Puzzles

Short Story: Food Court

Random Thought Bubble

# Our Enduring Constitution

Yes, it's the 250th birthday of the United States of America. So it's appropriate I comment on it.

I was recently asked to appear in a YouTube video, responding to the question, "Why has the U.S. Constitution lasted so long?" It's a fitting question. Our national longevity owes much to our Constitution. The producer only used a soundbite's worth of what I wrote.

The soundbite went like this: The Constitution has endured because it delivers on the promise given in the first three words, *We the People*. Not we the landowners. Not we the corporation. Not we the moneyed special interest groups. But rather, *We the People*.

Some may remember a similar statement from my first novel, *Phoenix in the Middle of the Road*. But, to be honest, the Constitution hasn't survived just because of a snappy preamble. The Constitution also survives because it set up checks and balances. Separate centers of power are set in opposition to guard against abuse and overreach.

Never believing they had infinite wisdom, the Founding Fathers also provided a mechanism to course-correct the Constitution through amendments. To date, there have been 27 amendments. The most vital amendment is the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech and dissent.

This is not to say we have always adhered to the



spirit of the Constitution. In 1798, John Adams signed the Aliens and Sedition Acts, one of which criminalized speech critical of the federal government, a direct violation of the First Amendment. Luckily, it was repealed by 1802. From time to time, there have been other abuses and transgressions, but the constitutional spirit endures.

Ultimately, the Constitution only stands if we stand with it. We must take it seriously and guard against violations of both the letter and the spirit of this revered document. It's our roadmap to fairer democracy and a better way of life for all.

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# News & Events

## Upcoming Events

Below are the book events I've committed to so far. Each in-person event includes a range of talented authors.

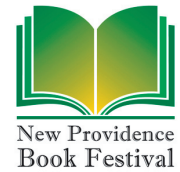
**September 12, 2026**  
Saturday  
9 am - 5 pm

**Authors Alley at Belvidere Victorian Day**  
Garret Wall Park  
Belvidere, NJ



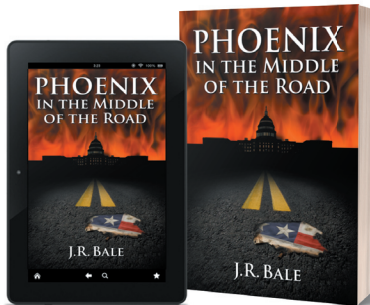
**September 26, 2026**  
Saturday  
10 am - 4 pm

**New Providence Book Festival**  
1350 Springfield Avenue  
Grounds of the Salt Box Museum  
New Providence, NJ 07974  
[www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com](http://www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com)



**November 14, 2026**  
Saturday  
11 am - 3 pm

**Central Jersey Book Festival**  
110 Ross Street  
Woodbridge, NJ 07095



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## About J.R. Bale

J.R. Bale has always tried to explore the themes in his stories from an unusual perspective, whether it was politics in *Phoenix in the Middle of the Road* or consciousness in *Cognition Chronicles: The Redstone Legacy*, and *Cognition Chronicles: Destiny's Orphans*.

In his pursuit of diverse perspectives, he has traveled to over a dozen countries across four continents. He even applied to NASA's space program. When not writing books, he is a marketing consultant and college professor. You can learn more about J.R. at [www.JRBale.com](http://www.JRBale.com).



# STORY EXCERPT

The following is an excerpt from a short story entitled *Food Court* from the upcoming anthology, *Cafe Oblivion* by J.R. Bale

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Positioned along the interstellar trade routes, the Glariston Space Station had become central to interplanetary diplomacy and interspecies trade and governance.

Justice Meegloron Peez, a Geeropti cephalopod, presided over the Court of Galactic Standing. Unfortunately, most had come to refer to it as the “Food Court.” The name may have been frivolous, but the weight of the decisions was immense.

Peez pounded her gavel. The various species quieted down. She began her usual introduction.

“Attending species of the Galaxy,” Peez began. “It is a universal truth that to live, something else must die, even if it’s just broccoli. (No offense to any broccoli listening.) It is a regrettable truth. For the sake of galactic order, we must distinguish between which organisms have the right to eat and which may be eaten. In other words, which species are listed on the Galactic Menu. There are great legal and ethical issues here. For centuries, this was a fairly easy affair. However, with the rise of interplanetary travel and sentience in so many species, this issue has become problematic. Even my parents’ lawn is expressing opinions these days.”

“The question is,” one member of the gallery called out, “how stupid do you have to be to be food?”

This was followed by raucous laughter and the equivalent reaction depending on the species. For instance, the Frellezi gave a multi-octave vibrating snort. Judge Peez banged her gavel. “Order! Order in my court!” She gave the gallery a deadly stare that only seven eyes could deliver.

“Bailiff, what case is first on the docket?” Peez asked.

“Case 5021: The Drellians of Septrus-3. They are a single planetary species. Level beta intelligence on the Vreemik Scale. Level 2A on the Lerpik Industrial Scale.”

“And they taste delicious in a light Zroquette sauce,”

blurted out the plaintiff’s counselor. Again the gallery erupted in laughter.

“Objection!” the Species Defender shouted.

“Objection sustained,” Judge Peez said. “Counselor, have you actually tasted Drellian flesh?”

“No, Your Honor. But my client says they taste quite delicious.”

“Until a judgement is made, keep your culinary opinions to yourself.” Peez turned back to the bailiff.

“Bailiff, state the inciting incident.”

“On the 839th galactic cycle, a Pelgari named Icsak Ull crashed on Septrus-3 and after 13 diurnal cycles, ate a Drellian to survive. Upon rescue, he was charged with xeno-cannibalism.”

“Accordingly,” the plaintiff’s counsel we are asserting the Drellians are not a sufficiently advanced or intelligent to qualify as a sentient species. Therefore, a charge of xeno-cannibalism is inappropriate. Honestly, the Drellians should be listed on the Galactic Menu.”

The Species Defender stepped forward.

“Objection, your Honor. The counselor’s characterization that the Drellians are ‘not a sufficiently advanced or intelligent species’ is a statement of bias.”

“They are rated level beta intelligence on the Vreemik Scale,” The plaintiff’s counselor replied.

“Which is biased in itself.”

“The Drellians are plants. They are essentially salad ingredients.

“Objection to such blatant bigotry! There are many intelligent plant species in the galaxy.”

“Calm down,” Peez warned. “I believe you were saying the Vreemik Scale is biased.”

“Yes, your Honor,” the Defender continued. “Despite their plant roots, the Drellians are quite advanced intellectually. They have invented both quantum dancing

and solar poetry. Such advancements are not considered in the Vreemik Scale.”

“They haven’t even invented the wheel.”

“In the field, they’re late bloomers,” the defender said. “That doesn’t mean they should be on the menu.”

“Intelligence is not the only issue,” snapped the plaintiff. “Permit me, a citation. While the Yrenagari of the Klegus Moons are particularly stupid, they are so low in nutritional value that they are not worth eating. Thus, they are off the menu. Meanwhile Drellians are quite nutritious. A single Drellian could feed a village for a week. And that includes dessert.”

“We will adjourn for 15 centi-cycles,” Peez said, “while I consider the particulars. Then I will render my judgement.”

True to her word, Peez returned to the courtroom within the prescribed time.

“I’m ready to make my decision,” Peez said. “While I can understand how your client being starved might have make him mistake a Drellian for something on the Galactic Menu, and therefore is in a gray area. However, I am designating the Drellian species as sufficiently intelligent and therefore designated Off the Menu.”

“A question, Your Honor,” the counselor said. “What if someone is just a bit peckish and just chomp on a few toes?”

“Get out!”

Peez turned to the defender and said, “I have to admit I would like to see some quantum dancing.” She

turned back to the bailiff.

“Bailiff, do we have another case?”

“Yes, Your Honor. Next on the docket, a newly discovered species, who have recently begun venturing from their home planet. They are called Humans from the planet Earth.”

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## *Off the Shelf*

### *The Edge of News*

By Tom Kranz

Getting naked in a hot tub full of Japanese men who didn’t speak English. Spending over four thousand dollars for one dinner. Being hypnotized by a concrete pumping machine. Getting fired three times by the same company. What does all this have to do with broadcast news? Find out in “The Edge of News,” the new collection of true stories by Tom Kranz.

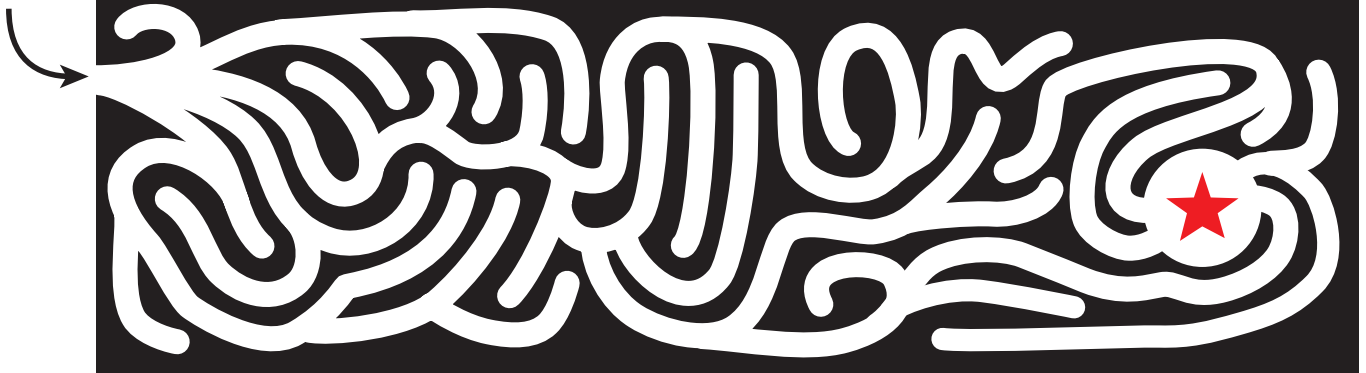
Learn more at [www.TomKranzBooks.com](http://www.TomKranzBooks.com).



# MENTAL WORKOUT

## Squares Maze

ENTER



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| I | F | C | C | C | T | B | G | Y | B | N | I | V | F | B |
| N | N | P | I | K | Y | U | S | A | G | G | C | I | S | S |
| M | E | T | T | X | S | B | C | R | L | C | H | L | N | T |
| B | R | I | Q | M | H | M | E | E | M | A | Q | R | H | N |
| A | O | K | K | C | G | S | L | U | X | E | P | I | Y | E |
| K | D | S | T | U | S | Y | I | V | Z | E | M | G | L | M |
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## Constitutional Wordsearch

AMENDMENTS  
ARTICLES  
BALANCES  
CHECKS  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
CONGRESS  
CONSTITUTION  
EXECUTIVE  
FEDERAL  
FREEDOM  
GOVERNMENT  
JUDICIARY  
JURISDICTION  
LEGAL  
STATES RIGHTS

# RANDOM THOUGHT BUBBLE

## Things That Should Not Be on the Summer Menu

As many of you are celebrating our nation's 250th anniversary, some are trying to stand out with their culinary faire. It's a challenge. And while I applaud culinary innovation, there is a limit. Here are a few:

- Lasagna Wings
- Liquorish Burgers
- Deep Fried Peach Pits
- Coconut Soup
- Taffy covered Brussels Sprouts
- Salsa-infused Pop-Tarts
- Asparagus Cobbler
- Broccoli Sorbet
- Habernero Ice Cream

To any budding chefs who have seen a kernel of an idea in this list, I say don't. Please, just don't!



Thank you for reading this issue. If you'd like to receive future issues, please go to [www.jrbale.com/newsletter](http://www.jrbale.com/newsletter) to sign up for more. Or follow the QR code. You may unsubscribe any time.



Thanks and be well.

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