



22 of 166 DOCUMENTS

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HEADLINE: Heartless Metaphor

BODY:

I appreciate a clever headline as much as the next person. But I was stunned to see your July 14 Sports item regarding a tennis player being hit in the head by a water bottle thrown from the stands headlined "Water on the Brain."

Does your paper need to be schooled in why that headline is offensive?

Hydrocephalus, sometimes referred to as "water on the brain," is a condition in which spinal fluid builds up inside a child's brain. It can cause mental retardation or even death. If that subject is deemed by your paper to be worthy of mockery and snickering, please let me know so that I can pass that judgment along to the millions of American families affected by mental retardation and developmental disabilities who might have occasion to read your paper in print or online.

-- Lorraine Sheehan

The writer is president of the Arc of the United States, a national organization of and for people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families.

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