

Thursday, November 5, 2009

Nonsense of scenting dogs.

Â The NIH's caption to this drug dog photo is enough to turn the stomach: "Nice to nose you: Flyer, NIH's only certified drug-sniffer, serves on the K-9 team along with 10 bomb-sniffers. A dog's nasal cavities contain over 220 million olfactory receptors; the human version has 5 million." (Image from the NIH's website).Â Overall, I am not very fond of crime-sniffing dogs, as I partially recount in my "Confronting Fido" blog entry. Â Dogs are no less fallible than humans. They can be wrong on smell tests. Their handlers possibly are unable to tell when the dog is incorrectly alerting. Being human -- and there being a huge percentage of people who are frequently dishonest -- there are bound to be police smell-dog handlers who coax their dogs to alert to a smell or lie about an alert that never took place. Â Thanks to a fellow listserv member for linking to this week's article on the mistake-laden dangers of crime-sniffing dogs. Jon Katz

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 00:00