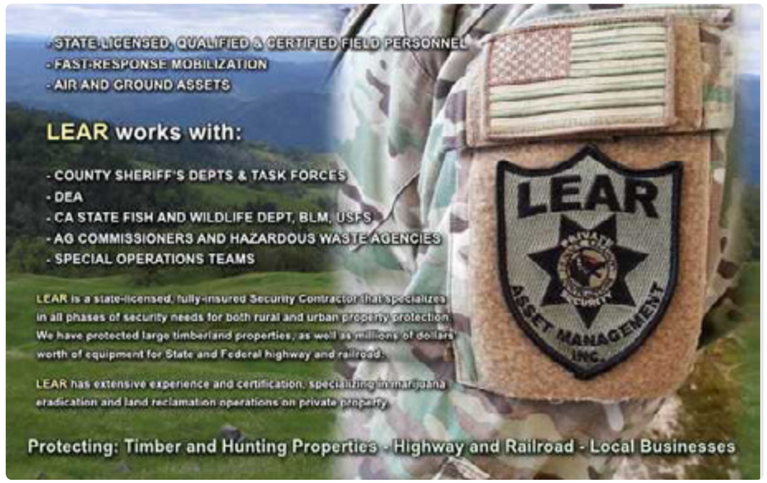
Shock Troops and Short Seasons

MOLLY CATE

Local farmer Butch Small reported watching a squad raid his Potter Valley neighbor, Susan Schindler on August 5. The attack followed the pattern mentioned above, except that he saw arm patches emblazoned with a generic "POLICE" logo. From her field of decapitated plants Schindler complained about the raid to CBS News on September 12, 2014. "There was no paperwork, no copies of any warrants. They didn't leave any inventory of what they took. I think they were targeting people who wouldn't fight back." Schindler's county legal, regulation compliant garden nurtured rare strains of cannabiniol (CBD) rich cannabis. These strains had been painstakingly created for youngsters with uncontrollable epilepsy and adults with Parkinson's disease.

But who was behind the Schindler raid and others? No agency took responsibility, creating just the sort of information gap that fuels rumors. Caught up in the shadowy mess was the new private security outfit, Lear Asset Management (LAM). They have been a sudden and very visible presence in Mendo County, and so, all too easy to blame for scary actions by unknown assailants. Lear Asset Management (Lear stands for Logistical Environmental Asset Remediation) was founded in 2011 by Paul Trouette, partly in response to the murder of Fort Bragg forester, city councilman and former mayor Jere Melo as he patrolled the forest for illegal grow locations on August 27 of that year. Trouette is a Board member of the Jere Melo Foundation (JMF) and is listed as president of the Blacktail Deer Association on their website.



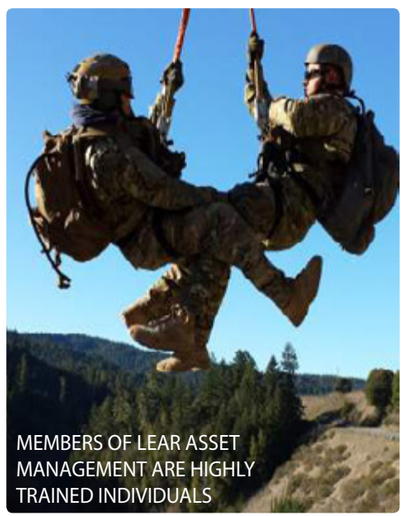
Both organizations are concerned with the potential danger to hunters and others by armed guards lurking in deep-wood trespass grow sites. That fear has been aggravated by some inaccurate reports on Jere Melo's death. Even though Melo was killed by an emotionally disturbed man guarding his poppy garden, the JMF and some reporters gloss over those details, implying by omission that Melo was murdered by cannabis growers. Press Democrat reporter Glenda Anderson and TIME reporter Alex Altman both reproduced that untruth by omission in articles published last July 25 and September 17 respectively.

Clearly, Trouette sees an opportunity for trained former military and police personnel to bring their expertise to a huge and little dealt with problem, the devastation of wild lands, water and wildlife by big drug cartels.

MENDOCINO

LAYTONVILLE

According to Willits News, last August Laytonville resident Robert Callahan submitted a letter alleging that private security contractors dropped from helicopters in vigilante raids, without any police support, in the Woodman Canyon area, east of Laytonville.



MEMBERS OF LEAR ASSET MANAGEMENT ARE HIGHLY TRAINED INDIVIDUALS

State agencies cannot even remotely keep on top of this scourge poisoning both the environment and the reputations of honorable, sustainability-committed cannabis growers. The LAM team includes personnel trained in hazardous materials cleanup. In a June 19th conversation with this writer, Paul Trouette said that his team can efficiently remove toxics, plastics and other refuse from a typical deep woods site in one day, restoring the area to health.

In a video circulated online, a reporter for Mendocino TV. com hired for the purpose and news staff from Willits and Santa Rosa document a LAM team as they clean up a trespass grow on Mendocino Redwood Company land. Heroic music makes it sound like an action movie. Team members are fully decked out in camo and paramilitary gear. The All-American hero style of LAM may set some people's teeth on edge but they are undeniably meeting a big need. Trouette has been adamant in interviews with Steve Elliott of Hemp.org and Dylan Scott of Talking Point Memo.com that his outfit did not invade Susan Schindler's place. His company operates under contract on private land only. As he said to this writer, such actions would jeopardize his company's license to operate.

In our conversation, Trouette emphasized that he has initiated dialogues with the Emerald Growers' Association and welcomes open communications all around. Lear Asset Management has several grants pending to continue the clean up work and they are seeking donations to a new Adopt a Watershed program.

In late September 2014 the mystery of the raiders from the sky was solved. Yes, the Schindler raid was a police action. Yes, other county-compliant, medical gardens were targeted. No, Lear Asset Management was not involved. Chris Roberts, writing in the September 30, 2014 online issue of SF Weekly explains that the tail number from one of the rented helicopters was traced back to the California Attorney General's office. A motley crew of California Department of Justice officers, members of the state funded Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force and county sheriff's deputies took part. And no warrants were needed because these operations fell under the 1924 U.S. Supreme Court "open fields doctrine" that treats privately held open lands differently from one's home and yard. Though Mendo County allows 25 plants, state law only allows 6, setting the stage for last fall's sweep. Fall arrives again soon.

On a side note, the Epilepsy Foundation (EF) is taking a leading role in the decriminalizing of cannabis nationally. In an October 22, 2014 article Hemp.org writer Steve Elliott quoted EF Board Chair Warren Lammert, "We strongly condemn police raids that rob children and others of a promising medication that may improve their lives when other drugs have failed." EF officials state at their website, "As fathers, we know the pain of watching our children experience uncontrolled seizures."

The EF is endorsing a federal bill, H.R. 1774 introduced on April 14, 2015, that would remove cannabis from Schedule I status with the DEA (most dangerous and without merit) and would designate CBD rich strains as separate from THC rich strains. A Senate bill, S. 683 introduced in March of this year would create similar changes.

Source: Sfweekly.com/sanfrancisco/chem-tales-kamala-harris-mendocino-marijuana/Content?oid=3177493

LEAR ASSET MANAGEMENT

WORKS WITH:

County Sheriff
Drug Task Force
DEA
Special Operations Units
Fish & Wildlife Department
BLM
Agriculture Commission
Waste Management

Mendocino County Blacktail Association works with LEAR Asset Management to help clean up forests:

"MCBA continues to strive towards practical ways of improving our public land deer herds, and address the problems associated with our deer decline. One of the biggest problems facing us now is trash, as well as poisons that affect our herds in our wildlands from illegal trespass grow operations - not to mention the overwhelming amount of people traffic from these sites that push our deer out of their normal summer ranges. We are removing these infrastructures with the support of law enforcement through grants from various agencies to improve forest health for our deer. Removing these sites allow our deer to rest, and the ability to move back in to their desired summer ranges again. To volunteer on one of these projects feel free to call 707-354-1652"

-MCBA Committee
mcbadeer.com

EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

Epilepsy is a neurological condition which affects the nervous system. Epilepsy is also known as a seizure disorder.
It is usually diagnosed after a person has had at least two seizures that were not caused by some known medical condition.

Visit: www.epilepsy.com or call: 1-800-332-1000