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South Skyline Association General Meeting

Study of Mountain Lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains

Presented by Yiwei Wang

Challenges Facing South Skyline Fire Services

Presented by Andy Seigel

Saratoga Summit Fire Station

Sunday, January 23

2:00 pm – Refreshments

**2:30 pm – SSA Board Elections,
followed by feature presentations**

Please bring a dessert to share. SSA will provide beverages.

Mountain Lion Study

Yiwei Wang is a PhD student in the Environmental Studies department at UC Santa Cruz. She has been working with her advisor, Dr Chris Wilmers, to study mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains for the past two years.

They have outfitted 19 mountain lions with tracking devices in order to study their behaviors in relation to other animals, each other, and human development. They also strive to provide outlets for public education and involvement for this project because they want to increase community awareness of the animals people share their land with. In addition, a good deal of their work can benefit from data and observations collected by citizen scientists.



Santa Cruz County and South Skyline Fire Services

Andy Seigel of South Skyline Fire and Rescue Company 29 will talk to us about the growing set of challenges facing Santa Cruz County Fire, from budget shortfalls to the difficulty attracting new volunteers to Company 29. This talk will begin with an overview of the delivery model for emergency services in the South Skyline area, and then the focus will shift to these challenges and how they affect the residents of South Skyline from all three counties.

Directions:

The Saratoga Summit Fire Station is located on the west side of Skyline Blvd. approximately 1 mile north of the intersection of Skyline and Highway 9.

Happy
NEW
YEAR



Quarterly Report

By Ruth Waldhauer

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement with Amerigas, Kamps Propane, or Suburban Propane, please contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth_waldhauer@yahoo.com, or 650-948-1466. Information is also available on our website at www.southskyline.org.

Recent SPUG prices with Amerigas/San Jose are:

June	1.939/gallon
July	1.930
August	1.699
September	1.859
October	2.059
November	2.159
December	2.239

Recent SPUG prices offered by Suburban Propane are:

June	1.96/gallon
July	1.81
August	1.81
September	1.97
October	2.15
November	2.20
December	2.24

Recent Kamps Propane SPUG prices are:

June	1.96/gallon
July	1.882
August	1.882
September	2.017
October	2.199
November	2.308
December	2.449

Expect prices to rise during the winter. Do what you can to conserve!

The open market price is about \$1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price.

Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices we post are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on automatic regular route deliveries on a keep-full basis, not "will-call" service. Some propane suppliers offer members 55 years of age or older a 2 cent/gallon discount in addition to the SPUG group price.

Those whose membership in SSA has lapsed will be disqualified from receiving the benefit of SPUG price for propane.

What Is Your SSA Doing?

The October General Meeting on October 24 was held at the Saratoga Summit Fire Station. The featured presenter was Mary Hazel, Supervising State Park Peace Officer for Castle Rock State Park and Portola Redwoods State Park. The Road and Trail Management Plan for Castle Rock Park is being revised. As part of the planning process, feedback, comments, input, and suggestions from park users is being solicited. Those attending the meeting filled out survey forms. The information gathered from the surveys will be utilized in the planning process.

The October newsletter was published to the community.

The January General Meeting is set for January 23, 2 pm, at the Saratoga Summit Fire Station.

Fire Safe Council: See "The South Skyline FireSafe Council -- a Big Year!" article on page 5.

Public Works: SSA will participate in a Sudden Oak Death (SOD) research project lead by Dr. Matteo Garbelotto of UC Berkeley. The SSA volunteers will be coordinated by Jane Manning, SSA member.

Land Use Planning: Some SSA members, lead by Frances Mann-Craik and Ken Broome, attended the public hearing on Truck Safety Issues on Rt. 84 by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Finance Operations Committee meeting on October 18. Among those who spoke were those who had been injured by big-rigs. The Supervisors Church and Gordon will recommend to their full board that they fund the study needed.

SSA Board Elections

SSA Board Elections will be held at the next SSA General Meeting on January 23 at 2:30pm. There are 6 board members who will run for another 2-year term: Patti Begley, Fred Glover, Jer Granucci, Judy Grote, Kim Hamilton, and Larry Myers.

Janice Compton is the newest candidate on the slate for this election. Janice has been active in the South Skyline community for many years, including service on the Lakeside School Board.

Do You Like Buttercups?

By Sarah Schoen

Their shiny yellow flowers in early spring never fail to bring a smile. Winter's cold must soon be on the way out.

California buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*) are perennial, growing 8 to 24" tall. Roots are slender, fibrous, and hairy. Several hollow stems are erect or may lie close to the ground, but do not root.

Basal leaves grow on leaf stems up to 5", with blades that are deeply trilobed, and then individual lobes are in turn trilobed or heavily toothed. Leaves transition to linear-lobed bracts going up the stem.

Easy to identify from other buttercups, California buttercups are the only local ones with more than 5 petals – typically 7 to 22. The petals' shininess is due to high starch content in the surface cells. Blooming February or March to May, the flowers have numerous stamens, numerous pistils, and 5 green sepals that are turned backwards. Single seeded fruits are approximately 1.5 x 2 mm and may be curved on one end.

The overall buttercup flower structure – open, shiny, yellow – appeals to many different insect pollinators. Beetles, which generally have short mouth parts, make use of the exposed pollen. The shiny, saucer-shaped surface may also provide a slightly warmer environment, attractive on colder late winter and early spring days.

California Indians used buttercup seeds for food. In earlier times, buttercups thickly covered some lowland meadows. In May a large gourd or closely woven basket mounted on a long handle was swept over the tops of the plants, collecting ripened seeds. All members of the buttercup family contain an irritating toxin, protoanemonin, which is enzymatically produced from the inert glycoside ranunculin when the plant is damaged. As heat and dryness destroy the toxin, California Indians parched the seeds, then ate them whole or ground them into flour to make mush or bread.

California buttercups are found from Oregon to Baja California below 6000 feet in open meadows and open woodlands that are consistently damp throughout the spring.



Slender False Brome Update

By Leigh Ann Gessner

Local residents can make a difference for our environment by removing the invasive weed slender false brome from their land.



Local residents are doing their part to preserve the health and natural beauty of our redwood forests by eradicating a potentially harmful invasive grass in our community called slender false brome. The Woodside area is the only known location in California of this grass, which if left unchecked has the potential to completely alter our redwood forests by inhibiting the growth of tree seedlings and native plants and changing the landscape from lush ferns and redwoods to one dominated by a dense, weedy grass. In Oregon, slender false brome has spread to over 10,000 acres and has become a serious environmental problem.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency whose mission is to preserve open space, protect and restore the natural environment and provide for ecologically sensitive public education and enjoyment. The Open Space District manages over 59,000 acres made up of 26 preserves, many of which are in the Skyline area. Slender false brome has been controlled within the District's preserves, and the Open Space District is helping its Skyline neighbors remove this invasive grass from their private property through a grant-funded reimbursement program, now in its second year. "It is a frustrating problem, but worth the fight," said a property owner participating in the reimbursement program.

Last year, local area residents removed 53 acres of slender false brome from their property and were reimbursed a total of \$18,480 by the Open Space District. In 2010, approximately 180 new acres were surveyed for slender false brome, 70 of these acres were treated for slender false brome, and the property owners received over \$24,000 in reimbursements. The majority of the properties treated in 2009 received second treatments in 2010 as new plants sprouted from seeds remaining in the soil. It has been encouraging to see that these new plants were smaller, and did not flower or produce seeds. Another positive result of the program in 2010 has been the discovery of several parcels that are free of slender false brome, which has helped define the boundaries of the infestation.

The District is continuing to offer a reimbursement of \$350 per acre of slender false brome treated on private lands. If you think you may have slender false brome on your property or would like to have your property surveyed for free, please contact the Open Space District's Slender False Brome Coordinator Ellen Gartside at 650.691.1200, or email: egartside@openspace.org. Visit <http://www.openspace.org> for more information.

Be a "Citizen Scientist" – Volunteers Needed for SSA SOD-Blitz Survey

By Jane Manning

Many of you have heard that "sudden oak death" (SOD) is in the Skyline area. We observe dying oaks and wonder what was the cause and what steps to take. In light of these concerns, SSA Board decided to participate for the first time in an on-going sudden oak death scientific study known as the "SOD Blitz". It is our opportunity to: get the facts about SOD symptoms; collect local samples for lab analysis; learn how SOD impacts our area; learn how to minimize SOD spread.

Here is how the Survey works:

WHAT: Trained local residents take leaf samples and GPS waypoints during a coordinated weekend event. A talk & training is provided by SOD researchers, who then collect, analyze, and map the findings. They give feedback on which samples are confirmed infected or not.

WHO: You and the leading SOD researcher, Dr. Matteo Garbelotto, UC Berkeley.

WHY: 1) assist local residents to understand and prevent the spread of SOD; and 2) help researchers establish how the pathogen is behaving on a regional scale.

HOW LONG: one coordination meeting, one training session, and the collection day.

WHEN: The training & collection will be on the weekend of May 13, 14, 15. Spring is typically the most active period for the pathogen.

More details: There will be a sign-up at the up-coming January SSA general meeting and/or you may contact Jane Manning at jmanning65@ymail.com. Don't worry if you don't possess a GPS unit. There is no cost to SSA for participation and no limit to the number of volunteers. Samples would be collected on your private land as a priority. Sampling on public land is under discussion as well. This coming spring (2011) will be the study's 4th year. Last spring, over 125 volunteers around the greater Bay Area, including Woodside, Los Altos Hills, and Portola Valley, generated nearly 1000 good data points. The maps can be seen at:

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelotto/english/sodblitz.php>
Please sign up--we can make a difference by better understanding the enemy we're up against!

More SOD background: The *Phytophthora ramorum* pathogen infects and destroys the cambium—the active layer beneath the outer bark which transports nutrients and water—quickly killing the tree. It has killed thousands of oak and tan oak trees in and around the Bay Area, and is spreading. While it has been killing/damaging coast live, shreve, black and tan oaks for ~15 years, it has only recently been found on sick canyon oaks as well. Much has been learned on methods of control since 2000 when the pathogen species was first identified. While early detection may improve tree survival,

there is still no known cure. Control is usually a question of combined approaches, including contamination control, isolation, chemical spraying and vector removal (vectors are other nearby tree & bush species which harbor but do not kill the host). Further info can be found at

<http://www.mateolab.org> and
<http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/>.

Possible Link Between Tree Deaths and Lyme Disease

The Santa Cruz Sentinel ran an interesting article exploring the possible connection between the death of native trees from the invasive Sudden Oak Death, and the possible link to an increase in Lyme disease. A study shows that the number of ticks that can carry Lyme disease is growing as a result of the gaps created in the forest when trees die.

The loss of the tree canopy can create hotter and drier conditions which may affect certain animal species. For more details on this study read the full article at:
http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/localnews/ci_16896108

Owl and Other Natural History Info for Our Region

by Georgia Stigall

Winter and early spring is a particularly good time to hear owls in our region. Species seen and/or heard during this time include great-horned, western screech, northern saw-whet, northern pygmy, short-eared & barn. You can view photos & hear calls to help you identify who you are hearing, by visiting <http://www.Owling.com>.

The list for North American species is relatively short so it's easy to navigate.

Two other very useful sites are: <http://www.hungryowl.org> and <http://www.owlpages.com/>

General natural history for our region can be found at the Natural Resources Database (NRDB):
<http://www.nrdp.org>

At NRDB you can create checklists for flora and/or fauna, search for species, and much more. The geographical area covered by NRDB includes State, County, National, MROSD & other parks/preserves in our area and beyond.

SOD-Blitz Programs in Woodside and Portola Valley

By Eric Isacson

The SSA Board will participate in a SOD (Sudden Oak Death)-Blitz program. (See article by Jane Manning on page 4.) SOD-Blitz programs have already been implemented in Woodside and Portola Valley. People there are seriously concerned about SOD killing the prized large oak trees of which those communities are so proud.

Recently Dr. Matteo Garbelotto of the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology Laboratory presented the results of the SOD-Blitz program in Woodside and Portola Valley. Dr. Garbelotto is one of the leading scientists studying SOD and is formulating ways of dealing with it.

The following are the key points made by Dr. Garbelotto in his presentation:

- The most important point seems to be that the best way to prevent SOD is to cut down all Bay Laurels within at least 15 and preferably 60 feet of heritage and other oak trees we want to protect.
- Work on potentially infected trees should be avoided during the wet seasons to avoid spreading the pathogen.
- Bay Laurels are the most susceptible to SOD; and, most important, they transmit it to other trees, especially oaks.
- Rhododendrons also carry it and should not be grown under oaks.
- Tan Oaks are the next most susceptible
- Other oaks are susceptible but less so than Bay Laurels or Tan Oaks.
- Important oaks may be inoculated against SOD by applying Agri-Fos and Pentrabark. Woodside & Portola Valley have set up group purchase programs.
- An infected Bay Laurel may often be identified by black tips on the ends of its leaves. A conclusive diagnosis can only be made by someone from Dr. Garbelotto's lab.
- The SOD pathogen thrives ideally in water films lasting 12 hours or more on leaves near 70 degrees F. It therefore spreads most aggressively in late, wet springs and when windy.
- The SOD virus dies when dried out by leaving cut material out in sunlight.
- Avoid tracking the pathogen on work or hiking boots by brushing off the mud and by spraying them with Lysol.
- The pathogen kills by efficiently boring thru the bark, then cutting a ring around the tree trunk in the cambium, impairing its vascular system from carrying nutrients up to the leaves. Up-to-date information about the latest findings on SOD and on treatment methods may be found at www.matteolab.org.

As with so many things like this it is extremely important to detect and treat the disease early. A SOD-Blitz program may be an effective way to do this.

Separate from the SOD-Blitz, MROSD is cutting down Bay Laurels from the vicinity of some selected heritage oaks to prevent them from becoming infected. One project is visible at Rancho San Antonio and there is an explanatory sign up at the Hickory Oaks trail near the Saratoga Gap CalFire station.

The South Skyline FireSafe Council -- a Big Year!

By Dick Schwind

The South Skyline FireSafe Council is only a little over two years old, but this has been a very fruitful year. We continue to be an all-volunteer organization with a core group of 8 very active members. I estimate we contributed over 1300 hours of volunteer work this last year. Some of our most important accomplishments were:

- ✓ Most exciting, after two previous unsuccessful grant requests, we have a big winner! Eric Isacson wrote an innovative grant request for performing a shaded fuel break on the Kings Creek Truck Trail. This is probably the most vital fuel break in all of the South Skyline area. Funding may be delayed for lack of a Federal budget, but we expect it to commence this year. The project consists of contract masticator work on steep brush cover, Ben Lomond work crew volunteer effort (see the article "Call for volunteers" on this page), and donated funds for partially matching the grant.
- ✓ Obtained our 501(c) 3 tax deductible status. Thank you for your volunteer effort, Gary Gechlik!
- ✓ Worked with all three counties where funds were available, to provide free chipping for defensible space by stuffing mailboxes announcing chipping programs, then coordinating three chipping campaigns for the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, four days of chipping for the San Mateo FireSafe Council, and one chipping event for the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District. This was our most productive program of the year. It saved our homeowners and communities tens of thousands of dollars!
- ✓ Added \$1000 (about 10% of the total) to the Cal Fire - Caltrans Skyline Blvd. shaded fuel break project, which added 5 extra days to the project.
- ✓ Instigated a shaded fuel break project.
- ✓ Started the Black Road (top mile) fuel break project.

[Continued on page 6]

Call for Volunteers for Our Fire Breaks

By Dick Schwind

The South Skyline FireSafe Council (SSFSC) will be working on at least two major roadside firebreak projects this year. (Shaded fuel breaks were done this year on sections of southern Skyline Blvd.) These projects will both use a 15-man crew of California Department of Corrections, 'CDC', aka 'Ben Lomond Camp' (more on them below) for the heavy work. We need trained volunteers available during the week as observers of these trusted inmates so we can make use of this valuable asset. **The CDC training will be Thursday, March 17 at the Las Cumbres Community Center, from 9am - 1pm.** Bring a lunch. There are also training classes at the Ben Lomond Conservation Camp at 13575 Empire Grade, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, same hours, 1/19 and 1/20; 2/17, 3/9 and 3/10. Also there is a class on 2/17 at the Woodside Independence Hall at 2955 Woodside Rd., Woodside, CA 94062.

We need about 30 volunteers to go forth with these projects. This will be a large commitment from our community, so if you can help us, or even if you want to learn about the program before volunteering, **check the box on the SSFSC section of the enclosed SSA Membership form.** Add the information there on how to contact you, or contact us directly. We will send you the details. A volunteer day will be about 3 hours long. Please show what good volunteers we Skyline area people are! You mountain people at the north end of the South Skyline come join us even though these projects are toward the south end, as soon you will need their help for your favorite project.

The first project of the year will be to assist our sister Santa Clara County FireSafe Council to produce a firebreak on the top mile of Black Road. This is the obvious evacuation route for people and their animals in the southern half of our SSA area in a threatening major wild land fire. The clearing will be done by a CDC crew. The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is paying the costs involved, but we must provide the volunteer flaggers for traffic control and the trained eyes on the CDC crew. There will be two 2 1/2 hour shifts a day for 3 weeks or so.

The Kings Creek Truck Trail is the second project. This is our own project being funded by our successful grant application! This should start in the second half of the year. Here there is no need for traffic control but we do need trained volunteers to observe the crew. There is also the opportunity to do real labor here, though the bulk of the work will be done by contract masticator and the CDC crew. The Kings Creek Truck Trail runs along the southeast edge of

Castle Rock State Park (the Park is supporting this project.) It is a Cal Fire back country access lane that divides in half the huge wild area bounded by Skyline Blvd., Rte 9, and Bear Creek Road. Presently this is not a firebreak because of the dangerous thick brush growing right to the edge of the road. Our project will make this road probably the most important firebreak in the South Skyline area protecting the communities and homes in the area.

A CDC crew consists of 15 inmates of the most trusted type lead by a Cal Fire captain. These are the crews that dig miles of containment ditches around our wild land fires every year. In the off-season they are available for a fee of \$200 per day to cover equipment costs and a portable potty for wild land fire hazard reduction work. Their local home is Ben Lomond Camp. It has no fence around it. For the inmates, who are near the end of their prison terms, the camp is 'Club Med'. Escape attempts are extremely rare and nearly always unsuccessful. CDC requires trained observers, what they call 'sponsors', to help the fire captain keep track of the inmates. Observers do not have any contact with the crew members other than the fire captain. Las Cumbres has made extensive use of these crews.

Dick Schwind
schwindr@yahoo.com
408-867-9422

The South Skyline FireSafe Council -- a Big Year! [Continued from page 5]

Our expenses for the year have been just about \$2500. This money comes from your donations plus matching funds from the SSA. We anticipate our expenses will be much greater in 2011 as the San Mateo and Santa Cruz defensible space funding ends and our partial reimbursement policy is used more often, and we support more fuel break programs. Further donations can be made to this project with the enclosed SSA Membership form.

I am encouraged by the progress the homeowners have made creating and improving their defensible space. Yet there is much left to do. Good access and good water supply that is easily available are also crucial to making your home truly defensible.

See the insert for our free chipping and reduced chipping cost programs for 2011.



Big Trucks on Route 84

Ken Broome and Frances Mann-Craik, SSA board members who head the committee to improve truck traffic safety on Route 84, are working diligently on the issue.

Route 84, east of Skylonda to the junction with Portola Road, was built in 1927, long before the age of the big truck. There are several tight curves that today's big trucks cannot negotiate without crossing into the opposite lane. Many collisions involving big trucks and cars have occurred. Some local residents have been seriously injured. Until funds are approved to remediate the tight curves, what can we do?

It is a given that we need services and goods that the big trucks deliver to us. We can follow the lead of Andy and Jamie Kerr, owners of Alice's Restaurant. They ask that truckers who bring their deliveries not use Route 84 but instead use Route 9 or Route 92. All of their suppliers willingly agree. Incidentally, travel time required for a big truck to come from the industrial district in Redwood City is shorter using Route 92 than Route 84.

Until Route 84 is improved, we can help by requesting that the trucks that serve us avoid using Route 84.

Classified Ads

FOR SALE

Georgia's Homesewns: Several varieties of bags, pillowcases and other fabric goods & gifts. Made in South Skyline region. Phone 650-941-1068 or visit <http://www.CoastalSeams.com>

SERVICES

Alice's Restaurant
Four Corners on Skyline
Locally owned and operated
(650) 851-0303
M-F 8:30AM-9:00PM,
Sa & Su 8:00AM – 9:00PM

Brown's Roofing Inc. Licensed Roofing Contractor, 15 year Kings Mountain resident. New roofs and repairs - no job too small. Free estimates, contact Jeff Brown at (650) 851-1125. Also, visit our website at brownsroofing.com.
References available upon request.

SERVICES

Handyman/defensible space clearing:
On Skyline, very experienced, inexpensive. References. Bob Speer
408-867-2784

Fred Rosenberg Construction
Offering construction and management services. Specializing in remodeling and new home construction. 29+ years experience. CA Lic. # 535661 Free consultation and estimate. Contact Fred at (650) 747-0137 or (650) 722-1780 or fredrosenberg@sbcglobal.net

Skyline Broadband Service
1 Mbps symmetrical broadband is now available in the South Skyline area.
<http://SkylineBroadbandService.com>
650-917-9279

South Skyline Real Estate Advisor.
Your neighbor for 13 years. The Bay Area Housing Market showing good signs of recovery. May I advise you on buying or selling? Sid Frederick, MS, Realtor, Ecobroker, and Certified Green Building Professional. Keller Williams Realty, 650/948-6426, cell 650/823-8400

SERVICES

The Mountain Terrace
Charming and rustic atmosphere. Now available for private events. Open for wine tasting on Sat. and Sun. 12:00-4:00. (650) 851-1606

FREE

Free fire fitting. This fitting will allow the connection of a fire hose to your water supply and can be utilized by the fire department to access the water necessary for fire suppression. South Skyline Fire and Rescue, web site, <http://www.southskylinefire.org/> in the "Help us help you" section.

Ads are free to members.
Membership is \$15 per year.
Membership forms are available at www.southskyline.org

Please limit each ad to around 45 words. Ads must be re-submitted for each issue.

Email ads to:
skylineseditor@earthlink.net
or mail to:
Skylines Ads
22400 Skyline Blvd #35
La Honda, CA 94020

You can now get SSA updates on Facebook. Become a fan of South-Skyline-Association.

SOUTH SKYLINE ASSOCIATION

Box 400, Star Route 2

La Honda, CA 94020

Consider Getting Your Skylines by Email

For those members who receive the *Skylines* through the Post Office please consider the option to receive it on-line. This will save paper as well as postage. If you sign up for this option you will be notified by email when the next issue is released. Sign up and update your email address with Ruth Waldhauer at: ruth_waldhauer@yahoo.com or 650-948-1466.

Those members who live locally where we stuff mail boxes will continue to get a paper copy.

SSA Calendar

General Meeting – January 23
Saratoga Summit Fire Station 2:00pm

Business Meetings at 7:15 pm:

Thurs. January 13
Thurs. February 10
Thurs. March 10

(Call Fred Glover for location and directions)

President Fred Glover 408-354-7121
Editor Patti Begley 408-867-3973
SPUG Ruth Waldhauer 650-948-1466

Join SSA Today

For just \$15 a year, your membership dues to the South Skyline Association will provide the funds to publish the *Skylines* newsletter, offer free classified ads, allow membership in the South Skylines Propane User Group, and provide speakers for our general meetings. Send your dues to:

SSA Membership Chairperson
22400 Skyline Blvd. Box 35
La Honda, CA 94020

Skylines Is Published Once A Quarter

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Ads are free to SSA members. No continuing ads will be accepted. They must be resubmitted for each issue.

Skylines Ads and News Articles: The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is March 20.

Send all ads and articles to: Patti Begley c/o 22400 Skyline Blvd #35, La Honda CA 94020, or SkylinesEditor@earthlink.net, 408-867-3973

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.