IRS wants its money from Stateline man caught in CalPERS scandal

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The Internal Revenue Service wants the courts to crack down on Alfred Villalobos, the businessman in the middle of the CalPERS bribery scandal.

Saying Villalobos is "depleting" his fortune, the IRS last week asked the judge overseeing Villalobos' Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to convert it to a Chapter 7 liquidation. In a Chapter 7 case, Villalobos' real estate holdings and other assets would be placed under the control of a trustee.

Under Villalobos' control, his assets are being "grossly mismanaged," the IRS states in court papers. Villalobos is falling behind on mortgage payments while letting family and associates live in his nine homes, charging them little or no rent, the IRS said. The agency said it is owed more than $2.5 million by Villalobos.

The Lake Tahoe businessman filed in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Reno last June. That came about a month after then-Attorney General Jerry Brown accused him in a lawsuit of bribing key officials with the California Public Employees' Retirement System. Brown's lawyers quickly obtained a court order placing Villalobos' assets under control of an examiner.

By filing for bankruptcy protection, Villalobos halted Brown's lawsuit and was able to regain control of his assets.

Now the IRS is trying to take that control away. If the bankruptcy is converted to a Chapter 7, a trustee could sell

assets to pay the IRS and other creditors.

Read the whole story

Treasure hunt takes contestants all over Amador County

49er Treasure Trail is an interactive hunt all over Amador County on March 26 from 10am-4pm and March 27 from 10am-1pm.

Navigate Historic Amador County by conquering clues and challenges, which are all worth points. Win prizes for the most points, unique costume, most fun team, slowest to finish, traveled the farthest, and more.

Get your clues from your 49er Treasure Trail Guide, available at registration. Clues will lead you to Clue Spots, where you can receive points and tokens. Challenges will come in the form of a game or puzzle. Enter the challenge spot location, play the game or solve the puzzle and earn extra points.

March 25 from 5-7:30pm is registration and kick-off at the ACT Visitor Center, 115 Valley View Way, Sutter Creek.

Results and prizes will be handed out March 27 at 3pm at the Amador County Fairgrounds.

Advance registration: $15 each/$25 per couple. Family of 4: $40. Day of event: $17.50 each; $30 per couple. Family of 4: $50. Kids under 18 must be accompanied by adult in order to win prizes. Registration includes: program with rules and map, gunny sack and lanyard identifying the person as a player,

plus a goody bag.

Banzai Tour – a test of free riding, downhill skills

By Dana Turvey

The Rahlves Banzai Tour follows a simple equation: speed plus terrain divided by fun equals just what the host still craves post-World Cup.

And Daron Rahlves is the guy to do it. He took a perfectly good career as a 12-time winning World Cup downhiller and three-time Olympian and amped it with a run on the newly formed U.S. Skier Cross Team and a fourth visit to the Olympic Games. Throw in some X Games hardware and there's quite a resume.

The three-stop Banzai Tour has morphed from its roots as the Silver Belt Banzai Race, which Rahlves re-booted in 2009 at his host resort of Sugar Bowl. A blend of ski and boarder cross strategy, big mountain free riding and downhill racing, the Banzai pumps racers four at a time out of a skicross start "maneuvering through strategically-placed gates on a big mountain course while navigating alongside fellow racers, with the limited rules to finish fast enough to advance to the next round."



Daron Rahlves brings the Banzai Tour to Kirkwood Feb. 5-6. Photo/Dana Turvey

“The Silver Belt event has been so much fun that I wanted to see it kind of expand and to also do something for Tahoe,” Rahlves told *Lake Tahoe News* from his home in Truckee. “This kind of series isn’t done anywhere else and I figured that it could be a draw to bring attention to Lake Tahoe in a way that’s really unique.

“So, I got together with (long-time sponsor) Red Bull and we tried to decide what other resorts would fit in. In addition to Sugar Bowl, we came up with Kirkwood and Alpine Meadows because of their terrain. With both places, it’s so wide-open and they get lots of snow, plus they have plenty of natural terrain features and impressive steeps.”

This winter’s Banzai Tour schedule had the first event at Alpine Meadows on Jan. 22-23, with the results sheet reading like a partial who’s who of winter: Errol Kerr, Shelly Robertson, Nate Holland and Chris Hernandez were part of the world class roster.

Kirkwood is coming up this weekend and the finals at Sugar Bowl will be March 12 and 13. The format is fairly simple: day one is qualifiers and after inspection and practice runs, each entrant has a solo timed run that is used for the four-person

brackets the following day. The finals day will bracket the top 32 skiing men, top 32 snowboarding men and top 16 in each category for the women. Then the banzai part truly starts.

At a fairly tame entry fee of $100 per resort, that gives racers two days of lift tickets in addition to the event. There is a total purse of $50,000, which allows for $10,000 in prize money at each of the resorts, plus an extra $10,000 distributed to the overall tour winners. Math whizzes will realize that leaves a spare $10,000 that goes to the winner of the Banzai Super Final.

Don’t look for Rahlves’ name on a check this weekend, but maybe at the very end of the series.

“I won’t be racing through the series,” Rahlves explains. “I’m more just the ambassador for the event and I’ll be there with my wife and our twins. So I’ll be there each day and I’m setting the course, forerunning and doing a lot of work behind the scenes. But I’m mostly sitting on the sidelines, licking my chops waiting for the Super Final, where I get to race against the winning skier from Alpine, Kirkwood and Sugar Bowl. Then it’s a final day, one run, winner-take-all $10,000 that should be a definite crowd pleaser.”

Speaking of crowds, spectators get more than just great racing. At each stop there’s a sponsor village with tents and a few giveaways. Rahlves has brought together an impressive list of sponsors, many onboard since his early World Cup days. Look for booths from Spyder, Bud Light, Red Bull, Contour HD, Giro, Sierra Avalanche Center, Atomic, Suunto, Snowbomb, 101.5FM, TahoeTV, Powder Magazine, Wend Snow Wax, Zinka SPF and Crux Events.

Rahlves says, “At Kirkwood, after the qualifiers, we plan to meet at the outdoor patio, the Village Plaza (at the base of chairs 5 and 6) and just have some fun. If it gets colder, then we may migrate to Bub’s Pub across the street. But at

each event, we have a charity that some of the proceeds go to – again, for Kirkwood, it's the Level Field Fund, which offers grants to athletes who may not have the funds to travel to competition. It was started by Ross Powers, and with other athletes like Michael Phelps and Seth Wescott, we're trying to bring it some attention."



Banzai Tour competitors at Alpine Meadows in January. Photo/Alpine Meadows

The Kirkwood course on Feb. 5-6, accessed from top of Chair 10, will run down Eagle Bowl and Rahlves guesstimates that it will be a bit more than one minute long.

"You get there from the top of the Wall, but the course won't start until the Eagle Bowl ridge to skier's right. Then it's pretty wide-open, which is great because there's lots of room to spread out and a chance to use the fall line. There will be eight or so gates and we'll set it so you can use the terrain to naturally soak up speed or just let it go and catch some air. Plus, you don't have to worry about anyone coming in from your right," Rahlves said with a laugh.

Based on the popularity of the Alpine Meadows stop, Kirkwood's entries could sell out. Register beforehand online and mark your calendar for a day of fun, speed and terrain, Daron Rahlves-style.

Final campaign finance statements released

Final financial statements from the November election were due Jan. 31.

All candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council who were required to file the forms based on contributions/expenditures have done so except for Steve Kubby and Elizabeth Hallen, according to City Clerk Suzie Alessi.

Two forms were filed by Angela Swanson because she had activity on the account in January before closing it.

Click on the person's last name to read the form:

Tom Davis

Claire Fortier

Angela Swanson (Swanson2)

Joy Curry.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Learn about what lives

beneath Lake Tahoe

Join Annie Caires in an exploration of the deepest areas of Lake Tahoe and learn about the biological community that lives within its abyss.

Caires will present a public lecture from 6-7pm March 1 at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences. The event will be held in the assembly room 139-141, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, .

Tickets cost $5 for the general public and no charge for students with valid student identification. Prior to the presentation UC Davis offers a no-host happy hour with wine, beer and food for attendees.

Researchers from UNR and UC Davis have recently found substantial change has occurred at the bottom of Lake Tahoe over the past four decades. What is happening on the lake bottom and what changes are being found in the plant and animal communities that inhabit deep areas of the lake? What is causing this change and how will it impact the overall health of the lake?

The team of scientists and volunteers initiated a comprehensive investigation of the lake bottom, the first since the 1960s. They used dredges to collect 400 samples from deep areas of the lake to detect changes since the 1960s survey. Looking for elusive native species, they found critters that live only in Lake Tahoe. These species include a blind shrimp that normally lives in dark caves and a stonefly that, unlike other stoneflies, lives its entire life in the lake. Meet these interesting species and learn why they might be the “canaries in the coal mine” for the health of Lake Tahoe.

Lecture on biophotonics

Join Marco Molinaro in learning about the field of biophotonics.

Molinaro will present a public lecture about the science of biophotonics from 7-8pm April 13 at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences.

The event will be held in the assembly room 139-141,291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Tickets cost $5 for the general public and no charge for students with valid student identification. Prior to the presentation UC Davis offers a no-host happy hour with

Biophotonics can be defined simply as the study of the interaction of light with biological material – where “light” includes all forms of radiant energy whose quantum unit is the photon. In biophotonics we generate and harness these photons to image, detect and manipulate biological materials as well as detect and cure disease.

With revolutionary advances in biomedical science, the understanding of the mechanisms of human health and disease has extended into the regime of cellular and molecular structure and function.

Tahoe Beneath the Surface

Author Scott Lankford will present a public lecture from 6-7pm June 1 at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences about what lurks beneath the surface of Lake Tahoe.

The event will be in the assembly room 139, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Tickets are $10 for the general public and no charge for students with valid student identification.

“Tahoe Beneath the Surface” brings the hidden history of America’s largest mountain lake to life through the stories of its most celebrated residents and visitors over the last ten thousand years. It mixes local Washoe Indian legends with tales of murderous Mafia dons, and Rat Pack tunes with Steinbeck novels. It establishes Tahoe as one of America s literary hot spots by tracing the steps of more than a dozen authors including Bertrand Russell, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Michael Ondaatje.

“Tahoe beneath the Surface” reveals how the lake transformed the lives of conservationists like John Muir, humorists like Mark Twain, and Hollywood icons like Frank Sinatra. It even touches upon some of the darker aspects of American history, including anti-Chinese racism and the Kennedy assassination.

Despite the impact Lake Tahoe has had on America, environmental threats loom large, and Tahoe Blue a term that Lankford uses to encompass the whole range of life, beauty, and meaning the lake represents grows increasingly vulnerable. In “Tahoe beneath the Surface,” human history and natural history combine in a most engaging way, one that will both inform and inspire all who would keep Tahoe blue.

Dismal fiscal year for Nevada gaming

By Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada's largest casinos lost $3.4 billion in the fiscal year that ended June 30, cutting costs by nearly $4.5 billion to help trim losses in an even worse prior year, the state reported Monday.

The figures were part of the annual Gaming Abstract released by the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

And they were no surprise to Reno gaming analyst Ken Adams.

"We knew this," he said of the figures for the last fiscal year. But he said that since June, monthly statewide gross gaming revenues, at least, have shown some improvement.

"The truth is, the state has, since last June, shown several months with revenues up from the prior year," he said. "The news is not great but certainly better."

In Washoe County, 31 casinos combined to lose $27.5 million on revenue of $1.5 billion, the report showed.

But unlike the statewide monthly gross gaming revenues since June, Washoe County's casinos have continued to struggle with revenue rising just once, in October. The latest month, November, showed a 19.6 percent drop from November 2009.

"Our problems are related as much to the local economy with 13.8 percent unemployment (in December)," Adams said. "And they've got casinos in California, Oregon and Washington. That's our feeder market."

To the south, the biggest casinos in the Carson City-Carson Valley corridor showed a net loss of minus 0.3 percent from a year earlier while Stateline casinos at Lake Tahoe showed a 24.7 percent drop in net profits.

Read the whole story

Tickets on sale for Rotary's St. Paddy's Day event

Continuing 43 years of fundraising for the South Shore community, Tahoe Douglas Rotary presents its 43rd Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration on March 19 from 6-10pm at MontBleu in Stateline.

The benefit brings friends and neighbors together for entertainment, a traditional Irish dinner buffet, adult-beverages, and a huge silent auction.

Tickets are on sale from local Tahoe Douglas Rotarians or by calling 800.576.8372 or by sending an email to stpaddy@tdrotary.com. Tickets are $50. A limited number of VIP tables with 10 special-reserved seats are also available for $550 each.

Additionally, the auction bidding starts early this year with an online pre-auction that opens Feb. 15.

Black History Month’s 35-year legacy

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to the United States made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926.

For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation’s bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month.

Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month.

The population figures shown here are based on various sources but not on the 2010 Census. The 2010 figures for the black population and other races will be released by April.

As of July 1, 2009, the estimated population of black residents in the United States, including those of more than one race, was 41.8 million, or 13.6 percent of the total U.S. population. This figure represents an increase of more than a half-million residents from one year earlier.

California is one of 18 states with an estimated black population on July 1, 2009, of at least 1 million. New York, with 3.5 million, led the way. The other states on the list were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.