

Goldsmith, Gary (CFB)

From: saintcroix@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 7:28 AM
To: Goldsmith, Gary (CFB)
Cc: Larson, Joyce (CFB)
Subject: Possible fraudulent campaign donation

July 27, 2010

Gary Goldsmith
Executive Director
Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Mr. Goldsmith:

I am formally requesting that the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board investigate whether a \$500 campaign contribution was made to Marty Seifert's "Seifert for Governor" committee on July 10, 2009. The campaign donation was made by someone named on the donation receipt as "Maria D'Annuzio." I have strong reason to believe that "Maria D'Annuzio" is a fictitious name and that the campaign donation was actually made by an individual named Bobby Thompson, who gave an identical donation to the Seifert campaign that day, using the same address and employer information.

The article below, which will appear online today, explains the basis for my belief that "Maria D'Annuzio" does not exist. Bobby Thompson is the subject of civil and criminal investigations nationwide for allegedly fraudulent activities involving the organization he heads, the U.S. Navy Veterans Association. Some of these allegations involve suspicion of using fictitious names for board members of his organization's 41 state chapters--none of whom can be located. Thompson is a major donor to Minnesota political candidates. I've written extensively about Thompson and his organization's Minnesota Chapter. There are links at the end of the article below that will give you plenty of background on him.

Thanks very much for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response within 30 days.

Sincerely,

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FORMER HOUSE MINORITY LEADER MARTY SEIFERT BECOMES ENTANGLED IN THE BOBBY THOMPSON-U.S. NAVY VETS MYSTERY

Seifert took a questionable \$500 donation from someone alleged to be connected to the shady veterans group under investigation in several states.

By Karl Bremer © Copyright

Former House Minority Leader and Gubernatorial Candidate Marty Seifert is the latest Minnesota Republican to become ensnared in the <http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com/2010/07/charitable-veterans-group-founded-by.html> tangled web of Bobby Thompson and the U.S. Navy Veterans Association (USNVA). This time, it may involve an illegal campaign contribution.

As exclusively reported at DumpBachmann earlier, Seifert received a \$500 donation from Bobby Thompson—the <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=10A.27&year=2009>

highest allowed by law in a non-election year. The contribution was made to his Seifert for Governor Committee on July 10, 2009. Thompson listed the USNVA as his employer and his address was the same <http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com/2010/07/us-navy-vets-group-appears-to-have.html> UPS drop box used by the Minnesota Chapter of the USNVA: 1043 Grand Ave. #555, St. Paul, MN 55105.

On the same date, the Seifert campaign received another \$500 donation from 1043 Grand Ave. #555 in St. Paul, this one from “Maria D’Annunzio,” who also listed the USNVA as her employer.

In an exhaustive examination of the USNVA Minnesota Chapter’s records filed with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office, the name Maria D’Annunzio, or anything remotely similar, has never been found associated with the group as an employee, volunteer, officer or any other capacity. Nor has it ever surfaced in the year-long investigation of the organization by the <http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2010/reports/navy-veterans-association/> St. Petersburg Times, according to one source close to the investigation. A http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2GGLL_en&q=%22maria+d%27annunzio%22&btnG=Search&ct=1280193874477&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=&gs_rfai= Google search of the name comes up empty, and nothing remotely related comes up in various name spelling variations.

CIRCUMVENTING CAMPAIGN LAWS A GROSS MISDEMEANOR

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=10A.20&year=2009> Minnesota state law requires that campaigns collect the name, address and employer of all contributors of more than \$100 in aggregate per year. “Contributions from the same contributor must be listed under the same name,” the statute notes.

“An individual or association that attempts to circumvent this chapter by redirecting a contribution through, or making a contribution on behalf of, another individual or association is guilty of a gross misdemeanor and subject to a civil penalty imposed by the board of up to \$3,000,” the statute states.

When the mysterious circumstances surrounding the Bobby Thompson and Maria D’Annunzio donations were explained to Seifert Campaign Treasurer Diane Johnson of Cambridge, she promised to look into the matter, as well as a request for cancelled checks or other proof of payment for the donations, as soon as possible.

Campaigns are required <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=10A.025> by law to retain for four years “records on the matters required to be reported, including vouchers, canceled checks, bills, invoices, worksheets, and receipts, that will provide in sufficient detail the necessary information from which the filed reports and statements may be verified, explained, clarified, and checked for accuracy and completeness.”

The USNVA ran largely under the radar in Minnesota until a <http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com/2010/07/charitable-veterans-group-founded-by.html> DumpBachmann investigation discovered that Thompson, the group’s founder and national commander, had donated \$10,000 to Rep. Michele Bachmann at an April 7 Minneapolis fundraiser featuring former halftime Gov. Sarah Palin.

Thompson disappeared soon after the St. Petersburg Times began its lengthy investigation into him and his organization. He’s been missing ever since and is wanted in several states for questioning about the USNVA’s activities and finances. The Bachmann fundraiser is the last known location Thompson has been reported to have been at.

Bobby Thompson has contributed heavily to other Minnesota Republicans and GOP party units. Besides his \$10,000 donation to Bachmann and the \$500 Seifert donation attributed to him on campaign finance reports, Thompson has donated:

- \$21,500 to Republican Norm Coleman’s Senate re-election campaign from 2006-2008
- \$7,000 to the Minnesota House Republican Campaign Committee in 2008-2009
- \$10,400 to the Republican Party of Minnesota from 2008-2010

- \$500 to Republican David J. Carlson’s Citizens for David Carlson committee in House District 67B in 2008. On that donation, Thompson listed his occupation as “Director Development (sic) US Navy.”

David J. Carlson has other connections to Thompson and the USNVA as well.

Stillwater lobbyist <http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com/2010/07/bachmanns-pal-pod-lobbyist-edwin-cain.html> Ed Cain, who was hired as a http://www.vpap.org/lobbyists/lobbyist_details/187943?lobbying_client_id=187942&period=2009-2010 consultant by the U.S. Navy Veterans Association to lobby in Virginia earlier this year, and a Mary Cain from the same address, also a lobbyist, donated \$500 each to Carlson on the same day as Thompson’s donation was recorded. Thompson and the Cains represented three of the top six individual donors to Carlson’s campaign that year.

Carlson’s 2009 State Senate District 38 campaign committee, also called Citizens for David Carlson, <http://www.cfbreport.state.mn.us/pdfStorage/2009/CampFin/YE/16892.pdf> reported an Oct. 13 payment of \$147 to the “US Navy Veterans Association, 475 Highcroft Rd., Wayzata, MN 55391” for “parade and event fees.” That http://www.zillow.com/homedetails/475-Highcroft-Rd-Wayzata-MN-55391/1699726_zpid/ address is registered in the name of Alexander Plechash and Denise Kozojed-Plechash, according to Hennepin County property tax records.

That appears to be retired U.S. Marine Corp lieutenant colonel and U.S. Naval Academy alumnus <http://www.usna.com/Page.aspx?pid=4202> Alexander Plechash, who has been active in a number of GOP campaigns, including John McCain, Norm Coleman and Minnesota Third District Congressman Erik Paulsen. However, it is not yet known whether there is any connection between Plechash and Bobby Thompson or the USNVA.

Political candidates in other states who took donations from Thompson—with the exception of Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, a Republican who took \$55,500 from Thompson in 2009—have contributed them to other charitable organizations.

Bachmann, however, is not returning the suspicious \$10,000 donation she received from Thompson, her donor-on-the-lam. Instead, campaign spookster Gina Countryman told the http://www.twincities.com/ci_15554206 St. Paul Pioneer Press that the Republican congresswoman has merely “frozen” the funds in her campaign treasury until the investigation into Thompson’s affairs is complete.

This isn’t the first time Michele Bachmann has been caught taking large campaign contributions from questionable sources.

In 2008, it was revealed that Bachmann had received tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Frank Vennes Jr. and his family. Vennes is a <http://cases.justia.com/us-court-of-appeals/F3/26/1448/618916/> convicted money-launderer/cocaine runner/gun runner for whom Bachmann had requested a http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v239/Pugripz/Pardon_Bachmann_Complete.jpg presidential pardon in 2007.

When Vennes became implicated—but never charged—in the Tom Petters multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme in 2008, Bachmann <http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com/2009/01/pardongate-was-bachmann-wrong-to-tear.html> quickly rescinded her pardon request for her close personal friend, and then tried to further save face by giving away a portion of the money she had taken from Vennes and family—although it was only \$9,200 of the \$27,400 she had hauled in from the Vennes family from 2005-2008.

The Minnesota Attorney General’s Office has refused to confirm or deny whether an investigation is underway into the USNVA Minnesota Chapter, even though the organization’s chapters have been ordered to cease

fundraising and/or are under investigation in Ohio, Virginia, Florida, Hawaii, New Mexico, Missouri, Oregon and New Hampshire.

Karl Bremer is a freelance writer in Stillwater, MN. He can be reached at saintcroix (at) aol.com.

More articles on the U.S. Navy Veterans Association Minnesota Chapter here:

<http://tinyurl.com/28ysmhe>

<http://tinyurl.com/2d7b4nw>

<http://tinyurl.com/38k948e>

<http://tinyurl.com/25kzft9>

<http://tinyurl.com/33c8bcy>

<http://tinyurl.com/2vldmqv>

<http://tinyurl.com/36nqxm2>

<http://tinyurl.com/2wrsdjp>