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## Carmel Valley resident/state prosecutor takes trip to Czech Republic to teach course on the rights of crime victims in the U.S.

By Joe Tash

State prosecutor and Carmel Valley resident Brad Weinreb spent two weeks this winter educating law students in the Czech Republic about crime victims' rights, a topic of great interest in a country that still bears the scars of Nazi occupation and Soviet domination in its recent history. Weinreb, 47, a deputy attorney general with the California Department of Justice, was invited to present a course about victims' rights at Masaryk University in Brno, the Czech Republic's second-largest city.

"For me, the experience of being in a lecture hall on Thanksgiving Day, talking about human rights in a building that was the headquarters of the Gestapo after (the Nazis) invaded Czechoslovakia, the irony was not lost on me," said Weinreb.

Weinreb, a Texas native who graduated from the University of San Diego law school in 1991 and has worked for the Attorney General's office for more than 20 years, has long had an interest in victim's rights, which led to his invitation to the Czech Republic.

Along with handling appeals of criminal convictions on behalf of the government ("Local prosecutors put people in prison and I make sure they stay there,") Weinreb is also state coordinator of Marsy's Law, a victim's bill of rights approved by California voters in 2008.

In that capacity, he writes articles about victim's rights for legal magazines and also trains police and prosecutors.

The Czech Republic has undergone major changes in its legal system since establishing itself as a democracy in 1989, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Just last year, the Czech Republic



Brad Weinreb with visiting Israeli Professor Yehudah Adar in front of Administrative Court. Courtesy photo

adopted a Victim's Rights Act, and is working to fine-tune and improve the law, according to Jan Provaznik, an attorney who served as Weinreb's assistant and tour guide during his visit in November and December.

"I think that all the inspiration Bradley brought with him from the U.S. will come in handy as victim's rights are very topical right now, as the Czech Republic finally realized that the victim is an independent party of the criminal proceedings, and that it is not only a passive object of the crime," wrote Provaznik in an email.

Weinreb spoke to the law students about the victim's rights movements in the U.S. and California, the psychology of crime victims and why they sometimes don't want to cooperate with authorities, elder abuse, and other topics.

"(The students) responded with great curiosity, had lots of questions and engaged into discussions exceeding the scope of the lectures," wrote Provaznik.

During his stay, Weinreb also met with law professors, prosecutors and the vice president of the Constitutional Court, the Czech Republic's equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Among the differences between the U.S. and Czech legal systems, said Weinreb, is that the Czech Republic does not use juries, but instead a judge is involved in a case from investigation through determination of guilt.

Language was not a problem, as Weinreb taught the class in English, which was spoken by the students and legal professionals. Weinreb flew into Vienna and took the train to Brno, and also visited Bratislava and Prague, as well as a former concentration camp in Terezin. The trip marked his first visit to the Czech Republic.

He was captivated by Prague, which he said is "one of the most beautiful cities in the world." Weinreb is comfortable in an academic setting, as in addition to his duties with the state prosecutor's office, he teaches an appellate advocacy class at California Western School of Law. He is also wants to develop a course on crime and psychology.

The father of a son and daughter in high school, Weinreb sits on the boards of several nonprofit groups, including the Crime Victims Action Alliance, the San Diego Animal Support Foundation and the Dreyfuss Initiative, founded by Academy Award-winning actor and Olivenhain resident Richard Dreyfuss.

Weinreb has also filed papers to run for Superior Court judge in the June election. "If the voters have confidence in me I would like nothing better" than to don judicial robes, he said.