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'Common-law' rules changed in 1988

Courtesy of BRIAN
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The number of couples living common law in Canada has doubled since 1981. But it's only since 1988 that Revenue Canada began recognizing common-law spouses as married for tax purposes.

To meet the "married" test, a couple must be of the opposite sex and have either lived together throughout a 12-month period or both be the parents of a child.

Being married for tax pur-

poses has its good and bad points.

For example, you are allowed only one tax-free principal residence, but you can claim the spouse tax credit and make spousal RRSP contributions.

A variety of educational institutions qualify for the \$100 per month education tax credit (monthly tax savings of about \$26, depending on the province), including Canadian universities and community colleges, institutions offering courses that provide

or improve qualifications of a person for employment or carrying on a business, American educational institutions near the border if the student commutes to classes from Canada, and universities outside of Canada if the student was enrolled for at least 13 consecutive weeks.

Courses must generally last for three weeks and require at least ten hours of course and outside-class work each week.

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FREEDOM! Winners of the North Halton Cultural Awareness Council's poster contest were feted last Tuesday at the Cultural Centre. From left: First-place winner Beth Ann Burgess, second-place winner Jenn Vanderstarren and third-place winner Jannette Jensen. (Jennifer Flesch photo)

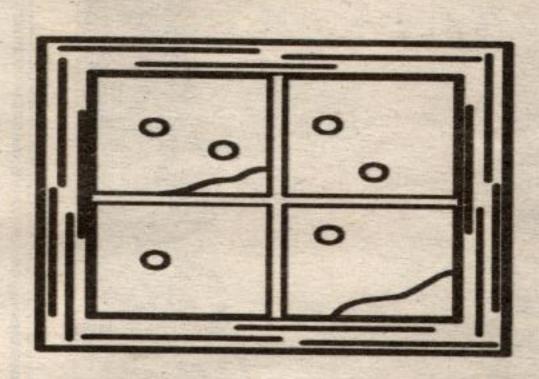




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