

Pay is due for training

DEAR CARRIE: My friend works for a major airline that is being taken over by a smaller one. So things such as pay arrangements and vacation selection will change to conform with the smaller airline's policies.

As a result, employees have to attend a training session to learn about the new way of doing things. But the new employer has made it clear that employees will not be on the clock during the training time. I told my friend I thought the company has to pay for the time spent in training because the employees are required to attend. Am I correct or can the airline require training and not pay the employee for the time?

— *Training Daze*

DEAR TRAINING: Your instincts are right. When a company requires training, it has to consider employees on the clock during that time. Why the new employer thinks otherwise is a mystery. It may do well to bone up on basic labor law or beef up its human resources department.

Labor laws consider training work time if the employer requires it. It's as simple as that. And a change in ownership doesn't alter that fact. The company could legally forgo paying employees for



HELP WANTED
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the training time only if all four of these conditions are met: The training is held outside normal hours; it is voluntary; it is unrelated to the job, and no work is performed.

It's clear the training isn't voluntary. So the company has to consider it part of the workday.

Have your friend call the U.S. Labor Department at 516-338-1890 or 212-264-8185 for more information.

DEAR CARRIE: I have worked as a seasonal employee for a local municipality for eight years. For the first four years I worked as a beach manager and managed two people. After that I worked as a seasonal dock master. Since retiring from teaching, I have been working as a dock master full time. And I manage just one person now. I am wondering if I should have been paid overtime over the years because I worked more than 40 hours a week many times. In the height of the summer, I sometimes logged as many as 50 hours. Would I be able to claim overtime pay for all those extra hours? If so, how far back can I go? — *Beach Sum*



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If job training is required by the employer in the workplace, workers are considered on the clock.

DEAR BEACH: The first point to consider is whether you were even eligible for overtime. As a beach manager you might not have qualified for overtime because managers don't have to be paid overtime unless an employment or union contract calls for it. A true manager, as defined in federal labor law, has to manage at least two full-time employees, and most of his or her work must consist of managing, among other factors.

So you may have been ex-

empt from overtime as a beach manager. On the other hand, you may be eligible as dock master. But here is something else to consider: Because you have been a government worker, those extra hours can also be paid to you in comp time.

As to how far back you could go to recoup any overtime owed you, it's generally two years, and a max of three when an employer willfully violates labor law. Call the number above for more information.

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Call Carrie Mason-Draffen with workplace questions at 631-843-2791, or email her at carrie.mason-draffen@newsday.com. Your name and number won't be published. Not all questions can be answered; some may be edited for length and clarity.

Robust economy not helping many in U.S.

The Associated Press

"The economy," Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell declared last week, "is doing very well."

And it is. Steady hiring has shrunk unemployment to 3.8 percent — the lowest since the 1960s. Consumers are spending. Taxes are down. Inflation is tame. Factories are busy. Demand for homes is strong. Household wealth is up.

Yet, the numbers that collectively sketch a picture of a vibrant economy don't reflect reality for a range of Americans who still feel far from financially se-

cure even nine years into an economic expansion.

When analysts at Oxford Economics recently studied American spending patterns, they found that the bottom 60 percent of earners were essentially drawing on their savings just to maintain their lifestyles. Their incomes weren't enough to cover expenses.

Here's a look at the economy:

- **Commuters.** Gasoline prices have surged 24 percent in the past year to a national average of \$2.94 a gallon, according to AAA. That's the highest average since 2014. Analysts at Morgan Stanley have estimated that the

increase this year will likely eat away a third of people's savings from Trump's tax cuts.

- **Home buyers.** With more people drawing paychecks and able to afford a home, demand has intensified. Yet, the number of homes listed for sale is flirting with historic lows. The combination of high demand and low supply has driven prices to troubling high levels.

- **The middle class.** Most Americans depend almost exclusively on wages. And after adjusting for inflation, the government reported that Americans' average hourly earnings haven't budged in the past 12 months.

- **High school-only grads.** Employers increasingly favor college graduates over people with only a high school diploma. Out of the 2.6 million jobs added in the past year, the government's job data shows that 70 percent of them went to college graduates. Workers who have graduated only from high school made up less than 1 percent of the job gains.

- **College grads.** For all their good fortune as the favored recipients of job growth, there's a major downside for recent college graduates. Obtaining a degree has increasingly coincided with ever-higher student debt

loads. Since 2004, total student debt has climbed 540 percent to \$1.4 trillion, according to the New York Federal Reserve. About 60 percent of college graduates from 2016 held debt, with an average of \$28,400, according to the College Board.

- **Anyone paying for child care.** Children are immensely expensive. For nearly a third of families, the costs of child care swallowed at least 20 percent of their income, according to a survey posted in March by the caregiver jobs site Care.com. Nearly a third of parents said they went into debt to cover child care expenses.