

# Copyright Lore

■ Frank Evina

Many readers may be surprised to learn that *Copyright Notices*, which began publication in September 1953, was not the first newsletter ever created for Copyright Office employees.

During World War II, Copyright staffers came up with the idea of publishing a small monthly newsletter especially for Copyright Office servicemen who answered their nation's call to duty. On Aug. 1, 1942, the *Copyright Office Service Bulletin*, bearing a hand-drawn patriotic eagle masthead design, made its debut. It consisted of five mimeographed pages. Edited by Michael McKool, a searcher in the Mails, Files, and Index Section, it contained news about the Copyright Office and its staff. McKool's tenure as editor was short-lived, however, since the following month he left the Office to become a member of the U. S. Army. William Conover took over after McKool's departure.

According to an open letter to the servicemen published in the first issue, the *Bulletin* was intended to keep them informed of the latest "odds and ends" that concerned the Copyright Office and its workers. Birthdays, new appointments, jokes, and sports news were regularly included. The *Bulletin* was usually six to eight pages in length and was sent to colleagues stationed stateside and all over the world. From August 1942 to August 1945, 37 issues were published, including a special V-E Day issue in May 1945 that included the "Copyright Office Honor Roll," a listing of the names of all 55 Copyright servicemen, and a special tribute to Alexander Chavez, the only Copyright employee to be killed in the war.

A few individual copies of the *Copyright Office Service Bulletin* have turned up over the years, but there is no way of knowing exactly how many issues of this very rare and limited wartime publication may have been preserved outside the Office by veterans and their families. Luckily, after the war someone on the Copyright Office staff had the foresight to save a complete set of the *Copyright Office Service Bulletin* and arranged to have all 37 issues permanently bound for posterity in a red buckram volume.

Based on many comments received by the editors of the *Bulletin* during the war years, the servicemen seemed greatly appreciative of being kept up to date on activities in the Office while they were away. It is obvious that the publishers succeeded in their goal of giving the troops what they wanted to hear — events dealing with the lives of friends in the Office, items touching on the highlights of the experiences of fellow servicemen, and, most important, a forum for servicemen to stay in touch with each other.

One of the most important tasks was maintaining an up-to-date mailing list for all the servicemen so staffers could keep in touch with the troops and help boost their morale. By all accounts, Copyright Office staffers really did their part by corresponding on a regular basis with their colleagues. A letter received from the *Bulletin's* first editor and published in a 1943 issue perhaps summed it up best: "You've got a lot to be proud of, *Bulletin*. You were created to keep 'former Office-ites' in the armed services in touch with themselves and with the Office. You've done that job, and you've done it well! Above all, *Bulletin*, you stand out as the shining example of the loyalty, generosity, and true friendship of the members of the Office .... Congratulations again, *Bulletin*, for you are the spirit of the swellest bunch of people I've ever run across!!" — Mike McKool ©

