

# Machine repairman talks about work, philosophies

By KARLA K. MARTIN  
Reporter

In his bright pink shirt he reached over the skeletal remains of the typewriter. They were as knotted as his nimble fingers which poked and prodded and wriggled the screwdriver into the machine, like an old woman's pocket hook.

Robert Boyle peered closely at the stripped typewriter. His thick glasses set snugly on his heavy cheeks as he reached his neck in search of a hidden screw.

This routine has been the same for the last 36 years. The only changes Boyle has made in the machine repair trade have been in technique, because innovations of new adding machines, copiers and typewriters are frequent.

"I don't say I'm good," Boyle said as he pulled a coil-flexed strip down closer to the machine and never looked up. "It's something you get to know how to do."

But his two co-workers disagree. They smile and call him professional.

Boyle was born in 1924 and grew up in Houston where he attended Jefferson Davis High School. During this time he began to play the trombone and joined a polka band.

He became interested in machine repair after he returned from the World War II Special Services in 1948, where he lived in the army's traveling service band.

"I just played music," Boyle said. "I left the fighting for someone else. Besides, you can't fight without good music."

In 1942, he married Maurine Barton and together they raised two children — Sheryl and Billy.

When their kids were grown, Boyle and his wife moved to Magnolia — their present address. For the last two years he has worked for his daughter and son-in-law at Mistovich Business Machines in Bryan.

Boyle said he doesn't mind driving the 55 miles to work every morning because anything is better than having to drive in Houston.

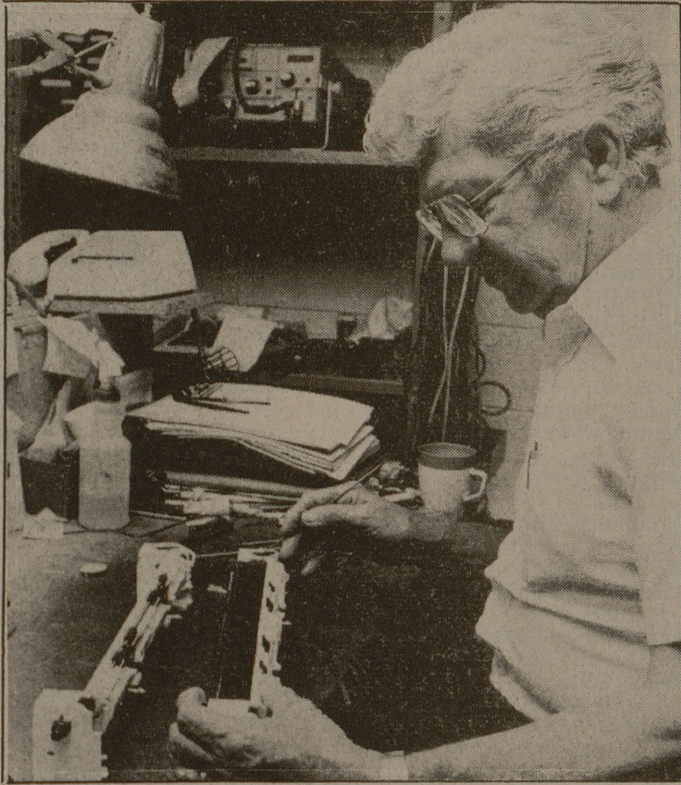
"Back in my day, things were different," Boyle said. "It was hard, but a man could make a living. My wife never worked; I never wanted her to. That's the way it should be now. All these women who work and don't have to are just takin' some poor fella's place who is lookin' to support his own family."

Boyle turned the typewriter on its side and began probing it with his tweezers.

"There's just too much competition out there," he said. He shook his head and one little curl jiggled out of his thick, silver-grey hair. "I'm glad I'm not a young person nowadays. I'd rather be my age and not have to go through all these hard times."

Boyle, who plans to retire within the next two years, said he often worries about how the younger generation will be able to afford to live.

"The jobs are just not there," he said. "Kids can't even get married, but that's okay. Kids nowadays marry too young. You should be over 25 before you settle down. My advice to young men is to stay single and



Robert Boyle

keep your freedom." Boyle himself married at 19.

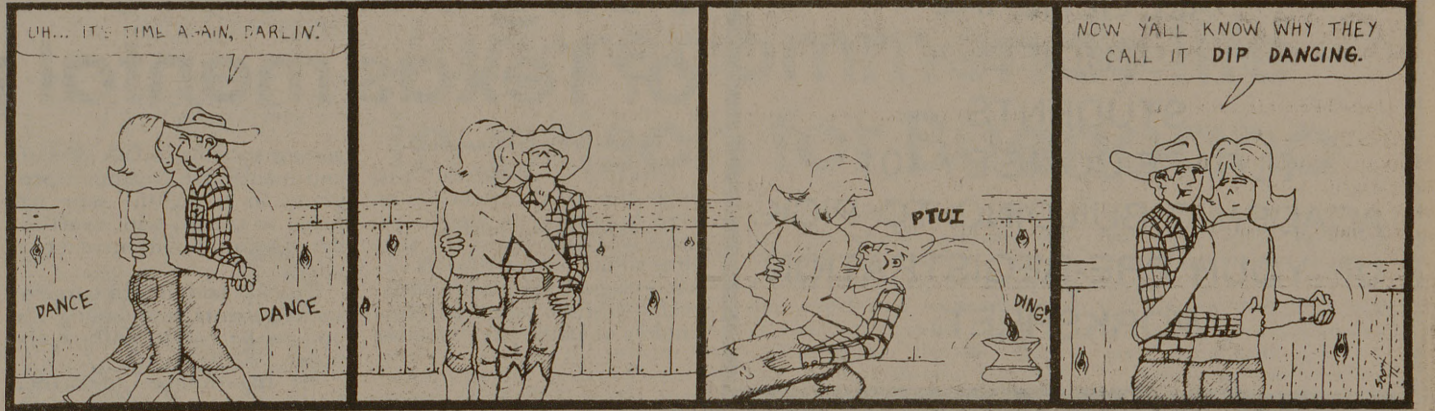
He finished the typewriter and wrapped its cord as smoothly as an old calf-roping cowboy. As he slowly reached for the next machine, his long-sleeved shirt revealed an old watch with a foggy, yellowing face.

"If you ask me," Boyle said, "people are too much in a hurry; too ambitious. Life is too short to just push, push, push. Ambition is good to have, but it will kill you."

He set down the new machine, nearly knocking over three forgotten MBM cups stained with dried coffee. He wiped his dusty hands onto his grey tweed slacks and started working on the typewriter.

"I might not have much book knowledge," Boyle said, "but I've learned all about things from observin'. There's a solution to be found for everything. All you have to do is ask the person with the problem, and not one of these so-called fancy experts who have a whole lot of book knowledge, but not one bit of common sense."

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