



Double the Grins

by Benjamin Lund, Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

Welcome to the newest installment of Office Visit, where we visit Townies' offices and profile their equipment, design or unique practice philosophy. If you would like to participate or nominate a colleague, please e-mail ben@dentaltown.com.

Generally speaking, according to various sources, the chances of having identical twins in the 21st Century is about three percent – which is fairly rare. Even more rare are for both twin siblings to realize early on that they want to become dentists and later attend dental school. Even more rare than that is finding identical twin doctors working at the same practice! Leave it to Dentaltown Magazine to find them! We are pleased to introduce you to Drs. Chadwick (“Chad”) and Shelby Denman, identical twins who work at the same dental practice in Austin, Texas. We interviewed the Denman brothers to find out what it’s like for them to work together and how they each decided to join the dental profession. We also learn more about their practice, The Smile Center, and what sets it apart even further from its competition in Austin.

Office Highlights

Bonding Agents

- I-Bond
- Prime and Bond

Burs

- Brasseler
- Henry Schein supplies

Cements

- Ketac Cement
- RelyX

Endodontics

- Profile System & Thermofills
- Root ZX apex locator
- Tulsa Dental Equip Rotary

Implants

- Biomet 3i entire implant system tapered to place and restore (encode abutments)

Impression Materials

- Alginate
- Blue Moose
- 3M Impregum Penta

Miscellaneous Items

- Baldor Reliancer Industrial Motor .75 horsepower for air/water
- Ramvac Vacuum system 1 horsepower
- The Cure Cordless (7) curing lights
- 3M ESPE Pentamix machine-impregum impressions
- Tuttnauer 2540M autoclave sterilizer

Operatory Equipment

- Easy Dental

Practice Management Software

- Dentrix

Restoratives

- Z-100
- Z-250

Technology

- Dell Computers w/LCD monitors, wireless mice and keyboards
- Dentrix
- Dexis
- Orascope in lenses loops 1.5X magnification
- Samsung LCD TVs
- Scan-X by AirTechniques for scanning phosphor plate radiographs

It's interesting that you're twins and you now work in the same practice together. Why did each of you choose dentistry as a profession?

Chad: When we were growing up, our best friend's father and scoutmaster was also our dentist. He was a major role model for us. He provided well for his family, but also took a very active role in his children's lives. He treated us, as patients, with the kind of caring and concern that sometimes seems missing in the medical field.

How did you both end up working at the same practice?

Chad: After graduating from dental school, Shelby moved back home to Florida while I took off for Texas. After I was asked to be a partner with the Smile Center, I knew I would need another top-notch doc-

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Photography by Bob Daemrich

Names: **Drs. Chadwick (Chad) and Shelby Denman**

Graduates from: **Chad: Marquette University School of Dentistry;**

Shelby: Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine

Year graduated: **2006**

Practice Name: **The Smile Center**

Practice Location: **6611 Hwy 290 E, Austin, Texas 78723**

Year when this office opened: **2008**

Practice size: **3,800 square feet, seven operatories**

Staff (size): **Five assistants, three front-desk staff**

Web site: **www.smilecentersaustin.com**



Chad's Top Five

| | Thermofills | Miracle Mix | Auto Matrix | Profile Rotary System | Amalgam |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| When did you start using it? | Three years ago | Four years ago | Three years ago | Five years ago | Seven years ago |
| Why can you not live/work without it? | Makes RCTs very simple without lateral condensation | Makes build ups very easy with being partially packable, but can flow initially | Makes a series of MODs easier in posterior | Makes cleaning and shaping very easy | It's strong, durable, lasts years and easy to work with |
| When do you use the item? | On all new root canal and retreats | All build ups in posterior | On most interproximal amalgams | To finish canal cleaning/shaping prior to sealer and thermofills | On all children and teenage patients with rampant decay |
| If you could change anything about the item, what would it be? | Nothing | Make it less sticky to gloves, etc. | Nothing | Make them more bendable without breaking when you are working in the apical 1/3 of canal | Take away the negative public perception about amalgam |

tor to help me out. At that same time, the company that Shelby worked for was changing owners, which promised a lot of upheaval for him. The timing worked out perfectly for us, so when I offered Shelby a job it didn't take much convincing. It was the first time in more than a decade that we had lived in the same city, after attending different schools for undergraduate and dental degrees. We didn't miss a beat, and our unique dynamic has been one of the sources of the Smile Center's success.

What is your practice philosophy? How do you cultivate this philosophy in your practice?

Chad: Everyone deserves quality dental care. We provide quality service for patients who are underserved. We strive to improve their dental knowledge on home care, nutrition and the benefits of oral health, and to stop the cycle of poor oral health in this demographic. We see patients of all ages and demographics – including the mentally-challenged – and we provide services in-house that most dentists normally refer out such as: implant placement and restoration, root canals, pediatric care, sedation, full mouth rehabilitation, cosmetics and all extractions.



Children's play room in the lobby.

What does your practice do that sets you apart from other dentists in your area?

Chad: About 60 to 70 percent of our patient base are Medicaid recipients (individuals under 21). Many of our patients are lower income, so our fee schedule is less than that of the average dental office in order to make a healthy smile affordable to most everyone. Our average number of patients seen per day per doctor is approximately 25, which includes exams, cleanings and all treatments. The doctors complete all hygiene services themselves. We offer all specialties except for orthodontics, but we're looking at ways to implement it into our practice in the near future.

What sort of challenges do you face in working with each other each day?

Chad: Being identical twins creates some confusion for not only the patients, but also the staff. For example, a patient came through the door recently who had previously worked with Shelby, and I welcomed her to the practice and asked her how she was doing. She'd assumed I was Shelby and started talking to me about her previous visit and dental work. After I asked her if she was here to see my brother, we all had a laugh about the mix-up.

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Shelby's Top Five

| | Garrison Multifunction Composite Instrument | Fugii II GC Build Up | Ketac Cement | Pulpdent Lime-lite | RelyX Luting (mixing type – no carpules) |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| When did you start using it? | Four years ago | Five years ago | Two years ago | Two years ago | Five years ago |
| Why can you not live/work without it? | Perfect instrument for posterior composites | Best build up, bar none – easy to use and very versatile | Very strong cement that works well with kids and easy to clean | Quick and easy, works great – no mixing and stays where it's placed | Easy to clean up, very strong cement that sets up in five minutes |
| When do you use the item? | All posterior composites | For all core build ups for crown preps and some Class Vs | Stainless steel crowns for pedo | For all preps close to nerve for post-operative sensitivity before restoration | For all adult crowns and bridgework PFM and FGC |
| If you could change anything about the item, what would it be? | Nothing | Make a partial packable core that is dual core but can flow initially | Make it better tasting | Make material that still allows composite to bond on top of tooth | Make it better tasting for patients and quicker set-up |

Have you noticed any benefits in working with your twin?

Chad: We're able to trust each other explicitly, and it's nice to have someone really close to turn to when you've had an emotionally exhausting day. There are no office politics between the two of us, and we always have another person looking out for us. Despite the large number of patients, having two brothers working the same office projects the feel of a family practice.

Since you began your career as a dentist, what are the three biggest changes you've seen in the profession?

Chad: The growing acceptance of implants, the introduction of mainstream lasers and completely paper-less offices.

What piece of technology has the biggest "wow" factor for your patients?

Shelby: We use digital X-ray images, which can be displayed and utilized in any of the ops, including moving them from the

room's computer monitor to the flat screen television mounted in front of each chair. Our patients get a kick out of seeing their X-rays blown up and flashed up on their screen.



Dr. Shelby Denman and assistant working on a young patient.

What is your biggest source of new patients? How do you market to new patients?

Chad: Our biggest source of new patients is those who qualify for Medicaid. We spend a lot of time in lower income areas of the community, sharing information about dental health and giving out toothbrushes.

Who are some of your dental mentors?

Chad: Dr. Tony Ziebert, Commission on Dental Accreditation Director for the American Dental Association; Dr. Richard Hagner, Professor for Marquette University; Dr. Hank Marcantoni, Oral Surgeon; Dr. Shayne Istre, Business Partner.

Shelby: Dr. Tom Schwartz, taught Business Aspects of Dentistry; Dr. Franson Tom, Aesthetics; Dr. Rob Michaud, Periodontics and Case Planning.

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What is your favorite procedure to perform?

Chad: I enjoy placing implants on adults, removing wisdom teeth and seeing children for their first visits.

Shelby: I like doing crown and bridge work.

What is your least favorite procedure/specialty to perform?

Chad: Dentures. I feel that something could have been done prior to this to keep some teeth as anchors and retain necessary bone. It's sad to see patients who are at this point.

Shelby: Hands down, endodontics.

What is the most rewarding experience you've had as a dentist?

Chad: Five years ago, I spent two weeks in Jamaica with my fellow Marquette dental classmates extracting and restoring as many teeth as we could, helping individuals who do not have access to care. In my practice it is changing patients' minds on what dentistry can be like; getting patients out of pain, educating and saving teeth.

Shelby: I spent nine weeks doing an externship with a dentist whose practice was funded by private work for patients who couldn't afford dental treatment. I completed mostly extractions and immediate dentures for people who have not been able to chew or eat well for years.



The Smile Center staff (from left): Joyce Jones, office manager; Angel Escobar, insurance; Sandra Hughes, assistant; Sylvia Menchaca, assistant; Rosa Rodriguez, assistant; Lisette Suarez, assistant office manager; Latricesa Betts, head assistant; Dr. Shelby Denman and Dr. Chad Denman (in back row). DeAnn Arnold, assistant, was not present for the picture.

In your opinion, what is the secret to a great staff?

Chad: Having an open door policy and acting as a family (minus the fighting!). Everyone pitching in during the day to reach a common goal.

Shelby: Surrounding yourself with a team that is outgoing and confident in their work. Assistants trained from the beginning to discuss treatment and treat patients with respect, as if they were part of their family.

How has Dentaltown changed the way you practice?

Chad: It's opened our eyes to different ways of approaching treatment and problems. Getting another viewpoint is always helpful. It's also helpful to see the situations other dentists face in order to prepare for or prevent those same types of situations in our office.

When you aren't working, what do each of you like to do to wind down?

Chad: I go to the gym a lot, enjoy outdoor activities, travel frequently, listen to music and just hang out with friends.

Shelby: I workout at the gym several times a week before heading to work in the morning and play competitive tennis with a few organizations in Austin a few times a week.

If you weren't a dentist, what do you think you'd be doing right now?

Chad: I'd probably have gotten my PhD in Nutrition and become a professor in that field.

Shelby: Math has always been easy for me, so I'd probably be an accountant. ■

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