

The Honeymooners

by Marie Leland, Assistant Editor,
Dentaltown Magazine

Drs. Aaron and Katherine Carroll met while in dental school. After graduating they decided to start a practice together in Groveport, Ohio. Dentaltown Magazine had the chance to talk with the husband and wife team and learn more about the challenges they faced in starting from scratch, what it is like working together and some of the things they wish they had known before entering the real world.

Why did you choose dentistry as a profession?

Aaron: I decided to pursue a career similar to that of my dad, a family physician.

Katie: I wanted to be in a profession where I could develop long relationships with my patients, and make people smile.

How and when did you meet each other?

Aaron: We met in dental school. Her cousin asked me if I would show her around the OSU dental school because she was going to be taking her boards there. It wasn't much of a tour because I was still in my second year, and didn't yet have a clue where anything was located, but it all worked out!

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

Aaron: Referring to my wife as Dr. Katie. It took me a while to get used to that.

Katie: One of the biggest challenges is to leave work at work and home at home. Usually one or the other is weighing more heavily on our minds and it can be difficult to keep the two separate.

What motivated your decision to start your own practice rather than joining an existing one?

Katie: Aaron's dad's medical practice is located in a medical complex that had a vacancy and it seemed like a perfect opportunity. We did our demographic research and decided to go for it.

Describe a typical day in your office.

Katie: We recently started working different shifts; one person works mornings and the other works afternoons. We each work out of two

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Name: **Aaron Carroll, DDS**

Graduate from: **Ohio State University College of Dentistry, 2010**

Name: **Katherine Carroll, DMD**

Graduate from: **Case School of Dental Medicine, 2008**

Practice Name: **Sedalia Dental**

Location: **Groveport, Ohio**

Year when this office opened: **2010**

Practice size: **2,400 sq. ft., 6 ops**

Staff: **3 front, 3 assistants, 1 EFDA, 1 hygienist**

Web site: **www.sedaliadental.com**

Sedalia Dent



columns, one major and the other minor, and we have a third column for denture procedures, crown seats, etc. We like to be as busy as possible, and on good days we are.

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

Katie: Our biggest source is the general practitioner doctor's office next door. The second biggest is newspaper advertisement. We market by direct mail, newspaper, local events, internal marketing programs, internet and others that we are probably forgetting.

What is your favorite procedure to perform?

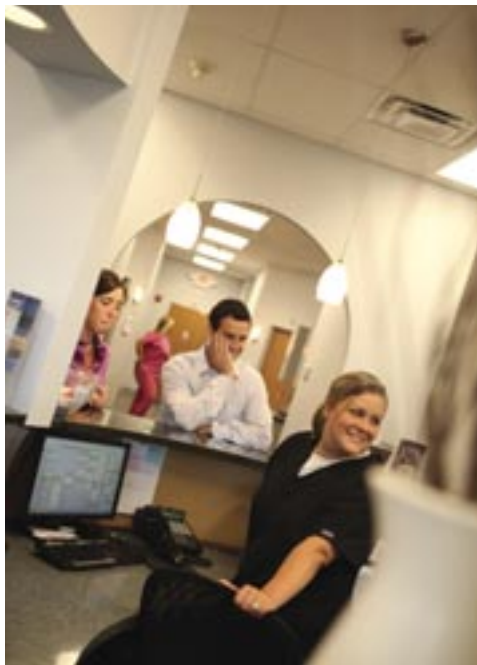
Aaron: Surgical procedures.

Katie: Endo and cosmetic procedures.

If you could give new graduates one piece of advice, what would it be?

Aaron: Get as much experience as you can, both in dental school and once you graduate, and don't get discouraged when a procedure is difficult and doesn't go as well as you would have hoped.

Katie: For a female, be prepared to have patients think you are the hygienist or the assistant, and do not take it personally. Don't be afraid to take charge and be a leader. Be sure to find



a good balance between work and family. One of the biggest challenges I have come across is learning how to manage staff, as a young female it can be very difficult. My advice on this matter is to be friendly to your staff, but make sure they know that you are the boss. Opening our own practice has been one of the biggest challenges, but is such a wonderful accomplishment that I would definitely do it over again

What surprised you the most when you got out of school?

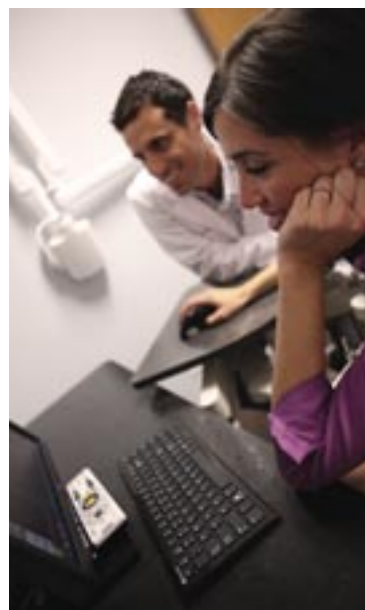
Aaron: To be honest, I'm not sure that anything stands out. I can say that it has been interesting to see which procedures have become my favorites because a couple are procedures that I

really did not like doing in dental school.

Katie: How much faster I can prep a crown.

What were the biggest challenges of starting from scratch?

Aaron: It is definitely time consuming, and I know that if I was to do it over I would spend a lot less time on some of the little things, like shopping for the best price on every piece of equipment. Not to say that the little things aren't important; we definitely saved a lot of money, but I just think there is a tendency to get consumed.



Dr. Aaron and Dr. Katie's Top Three

Digital X-rays: XDR Sensors and Owandy IMAX Touch

We started using the sensor 12 months ago when we started our office and we have been using the Owandy IMAX Touch for six months. We use them every day. The diagnostic quality is much better than your typical film X-ray and it is just so much faster. We worked without a digital pan at first, which made us appreciate having one even more.

Clevedent carts and Team DDS cabinetry

We have been using these since we started. Our office is more organized and streamlined. Nothing is more frustrating than having your assistant leave mid-procedure to grab something you need, and with this equipment we have pretty much eliminated that.

Triodent V-Ring

We have been using the V-Ring for 12 months. We use this for most Class II composites. Without it... proximal contacts would never be the same.

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Katie: Getting systems and office structure in place. There are so many little details that I never thought of, even as an associate.

What are some of the things you wish you had known as a student that you know now after working in your own office?

Aaron: Some things have to be learned by doing, in my opinion, and business is very much that way. But, it would have helped to learn more about the management aspects of a dental practice, such as hiring/firing, being a boss and dental insurance billing. We are still learning these things as we go and learning from our own mistakes, but in doing so and talking to my friends who have started their own businesses (non-dentists), we have realized that learning by doing is part of the process, essential and unavoidable.

Can you explain how has Dentaltown changed



the way you practice?

Aaron: It's a great resource. It's like the dental Wikipedia with answers for everything. We'll read through threads and find different techniques we can use or to get reassurance on treatment planning decisions.

How do you balance work and private life?

Aaron: We recently took a vacation to Israel. It forced us to put our phones away for a week, and I don't think there is a better way to escape work for a while.

Katie: Making sure we still have "date night" where no talk of work is allowed.

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

Aaron: I hope not what I did in undergrad – Computer Information Systems.

Katie: A physician, which was my plan prior to dental school, but I'm glad I ended up choosing dentistry. ■