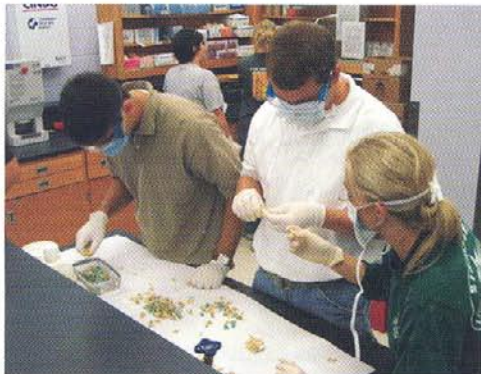


CROSSING THE BRIDGE: THE D2 YEAR (SAME SEATS, NEW YEAR)

BY BRADLEY HARRELSON, D2

What happens when thirty dental school students are reunited after eighty-seven days without contact? Absolutely nothing. On day one of our second year of dental school, thirty people who had not seen each other for over three months strolled into the same classrooms and assumed the same positions behind the exact same desks as if the summer break had never existed. It was as if someone had called "same seats" before we jumped off of our bus to run into the rest area to stretch our legs and grab some snacks to keep us going. The summer seems to have been just that, a rest area to regroup for the remainder of our trip. And now we are definitely back on our bus in our same seats headed for our destination of the clinics next summer.



Andy Abide, Alan McGinnis, and Holly McLaurin inspect piles of extracted teeth (which probably came from the mouths of some of your patients) in search of 12 perfect teeth for Pulpal Disorders. The D2 class is very grateful to the many dentists across the state that have allowed us to place our teeth-collection jars in their offices for classes such as this.

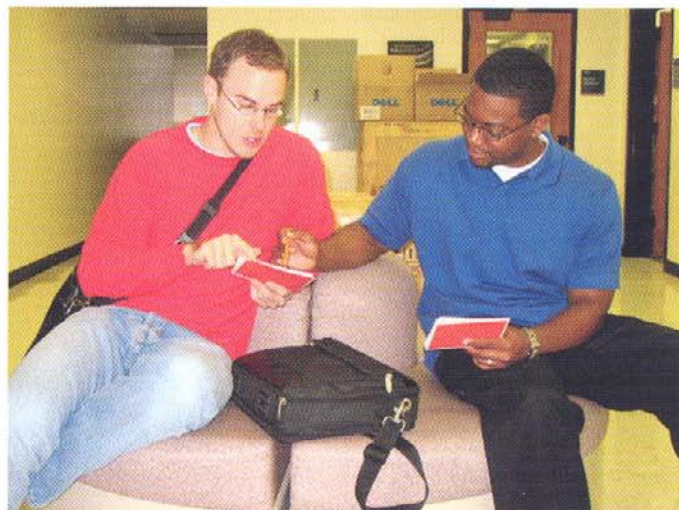
new dental students we are wise counsel in the midst of their first year. Our wise counsel is simply based on the fact that we survived the first leg of our trip, but many of my classmates have been approached with questions about a professor's testing styles or how to properly manipulate wax. I guess it is the one thing that can remind us that we have moved a little closer to treating actual patients even if we are in the same seats. There are now future dentists looking to us, whereas before our summer rest stop we were always looking to everyone else.

However, there are still miles of unknown roads that stretch out before us. These areas of uncertainty serve to ground us and remind us that we are still not in the lead bus yet. While we have easily slipped back into the groove of week after week of class with no major glitches, we are all aware of the very large

While we have fallen right back into classes and are trying to make it through the next test on our schedule, the one factor that is slightly different this year is that there are thirty-one people following us now. Although we are not quite sure that we know exactly how everything works ourselves or remember our exact technique for waxing the mandibular first molar, to the

bridge (National Dental Board Examination-Part I) that we must cross in December. Many classes with many tests have come and gone and have left no man or woman behind. However, our road has yet to have a bridge. It is easy to travel a road as long as you keep on pushing forward and don't fall off the bus, but a bridge lacks the solid support that has come with our road and the chance of loss increases. The intimidating part is that, regardless of your travel performance on the road, failure to cross the bridge will bring a quick halt to the journey. This bridge happens to be the only way to get to the road on the opposing side of the gap.

The good news is that our fall schedule beginning in mid-October has built in several afternoons with no class room obligations to allow plenty of time for bridge-crossing preparation and maintenance. It will be beneficial to have hours each day that are available for board preparation while not feeling like we are neglecting study in current classes. The challenge now is to use those hours wisely as opposed to just driving straight toward the boards full speed with no prep and hoping that we come out alright on the other side of the gap. Even though we acted like we had not skipped a beat since our D-1 year, we are all aware that this will be a year of crossing bridges to a new road. By the completion of this year, we will have crossed the "national board" bridge and we will have crossed "the bridge" crosswalk between the medical school and the dental school as we bring an end to our basic science courses and reside almost exclusively in the dental school. We are all looking forward to that day. **MDA**



With the NBDE Part I approaching, D2 students, like Michael Schut and Carl Anthony Boykin, are attempting to make the most of free minutes between classes by always having a few dental decks on hand.