

# really counts

Kevin O'Connor will wed before his older brother. Just barely.

"It was a standing joke that he was beating me to the altar," said Dennis O'Connor, who didn't know when he was asked to be his brother's best man that Kevin would soon stand up for him.

"As it turned out, he didn't beat me by much."

Two weddings in one family just four months apart could be difficult. Somehow, the engaged couples have avoided bumping into each other's plans.

"We thought about Kevin and Dana's wedding when planning ours," explained O'Connor, whose engagement just happened to coincide with his brother's.

"They should have their day, and we should have ours."

So far, the best man hasn't played a big role in the upcoming wedding. He expects things to start rolling in March with tuxedo fittings.

The bachelor party — traditionally arranged by the best man — will be put on by the bridegroom's Sigma Chi

fraternity brothers at General Motors Institute.

NO MATTER how big or small his role, O'Connor is flattered to be best man, he said. And he admits he would have been hurt if his younger brother had not asked him to be in the wedding.

While the two have been separated by college and work, they were very close for the first 17 years of their lives.

"It stunned me to think of his getting engaged," admitted the 24-year-old newspaper editor. "I remember when I was 21, and it seems so young."

"But I'm very excited for him. He's marrying a neat woman, and this is a good move for him in the future. I'm excited to be there and share the moment with them."

While it's hectic planning two weddings in one year, Frances O'Connor is very pleased with her son's plans.

"I'm going to get two daughters-in-law," said the mother of four sons.

"This is a very exciting time for them and a very happy time."

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