



During a pre-arranged train ride from the Renaissance Center, through Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, on to Pontiac and back to Detroit, members of the Reagan family seat-hopped, chatting and intro-

ducing themselves to everyone. Maureen Reagan, in the aisle, found time for most people on the train.



Maureen Reagan talks with Budd Co. executive Paul Sichert, who arranged the trip as a diversion and to promote his company's new rail car.

Reagan express: Kids take show onto the rails

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Ronald Reagan's campaigning son and daughter, Mike and Maureen, relaxed Thursday morning and went for a pre-arranged train ride from the Renaissance Center into the suburbs.

It was a way to come down from the high tension of Wednesday night's nomination and the intense speculation that preceded Reagan's vice presidential selection.

But they also wanted to talk about the campaign and about what had happened the night before. Both, in separate interviews, said they never believed for a moment Wednesday night that their father would pick Gerald Ford as a running mate.

Mike was with his father when he was making that final decision. Maureen was on the floor of the Joe Louis Arena with the California delegation.

AS SOON as the Thursday morning Reagan-Bush press conference was over, the Reagans — Maureen, Mike, his wife Colleen and their 2-year-old son Cameron — got on board for the ride through Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills, where they stopped to take pictures, on to Pontiac and then back to Detroit.

'Maybe next year Cameron, you can turn on the light on the big Christmas tree at the White House.'

— Mike Reagan to his son

The trip was billed as a diversion for the Reagans, an opportunity for a few press and TV people to interview them and a chance for the Budd Co. to promote its new railcar.

When the Reagan advance team was doing the convention scheduling for members of the family, the ride was one of the side trips decided on.

Two-year-old Cameron was pointing out trees to Mike, seated beside him, as the train headed north out of Detroit.

"Maybe next year Cameron," said his dad, "you can turn on the lights on the big Christmas tree at the White House."

MIKE TALKED about the Reagan-Ford ticket that had appeared imminent for a while the night before. It was never imminent, he said.

The rumor that sparked through the arena was that Ford would agree to run as vice president if he had some guarantees of shared responsibility. Newscasters were using the phrase "co-president."

"My father didn't have a co-governorship and he would not have a co-presidency," said Mike, who spent those decision hours in the hotel with his father while the rest of the country waited.

Ford was taken seriously, said Mike. "When an ex-president shows interest, you have to consider it seriously."

"But Dad and the former president went over the plusses and minuses of the ticket and both seemed to agree simultaneously that it would be better if the former president were on the outside campaigning."

MAUREEN Reagan said when she heard about a co-presidency, "Right away I knew that wasn't

going to work. Ronald Reagan is going to be a president all right on his own."

Mike said he gave his father this advice about the vice presidential choice: "I said, Dad, go out there (to the convention) and name the person, then duck. Because you can't please everyone. All those delegates out there have their own preferences."

Reagan did decide on Bush about a half hour before he made the announcement, said Mike. "He went to the arena to announce it then. They were all saying it was going to be Ford. He didn't want to give the rumor 12 hours to fester. By morning all the papers would have had headlines saying Ford was the one."

Mike, 35, and the head of his own company that sells equipment to farmers, said he'll be back on the campaign trail with his father.

"But now I got to get back home and find out about my business and make some money."

ACROSS THE train aisle from Mike, Maureen, 39, sat on the edge of the seat, bouncing around, greeting everyone, kissing some, apparently bubbling with energy. "Welcome to the train ride," she called to some people ahead of her.

"I do have a high level of energy," she said. "I've got two speeds, go like hell and stop." She had gone to bed at 3 a.m. and gotten up at 6 a.m.

"I'm not going to plan for what's ahead yet," she said. "As soon as it (the convention) is over, I just want to go home (to California) and do the laundry."

The night before, at the arena, she had taken the microphone and announced, "California casts 168 votes for my father, Ronald Reagan." They'd been teasing me all evening about getting it right, she said.

She continued, "I saw my first political conventions on TV in 1952. I sat glued to both of them. I decided then I wanted to be a Republican because they seemed better organized."

"And here I am, 28 years later, participating as a delegate," she said enthusiastically.

"I PREDICTED back when my dad was a Democrat that he would be a great president," she said. "Back when nobody else thought of it."

Maureen's mother is not Nancy Reagan but actress Jane Wyman. "She (Ms. Wyman) is very happy for his success, but she keeps a low profile. She doesn't feel ancient history should be held against him," said Maureen.

During the train ride which took about 1½ hours, the Reagan family members seat-hopped through the train, smiling at everyone, and introducing themselves.

Mike kept tabs on Cameron, held him for a while, followed him down the aisles. Colleen, also gregarious, moved around the train.

At one point, Maureen rested her head on Mike's shoulder and closed her eyes for a few moments. Photographers were shooting when she decided to take the pose.

PART OF the Budd plan for the trip was to put Maureen in an engineer's cap, and put her at the throttle of the railcar the company hopes to sell throughout the world.

When the train got to Bloomfield Hills, Maureen took control and moved it back and forth for the photographers. Later Cameron got to sit at the controls on the engineer's lap. "Bye bye," Cameron kept saying.



Mike Reagan, center, was with his father Ronald Reagan when he made the decision to pick George Bush for his running mate. Maureen Reagan, after three hours

of sleep the night before, rests for a moment on her brother's shoulder.



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Cameron Reagan, 2, was a focal point of the convention, everywhere he went. His favorite

words on the train ride were "bye bye," and "trees."