Dear Fellow Alumni and Potential River-runners,

The Grand Canyon is an extraordinary place. It has inspired awe and hyperbole for as long as people have been recording their reactions to landscapes. Looking down from the rim into the panorama of multi-colored buttes, cliffs, and alcoves with a tiny thread of river in the depths has made many folks into Grand Canyon enthusiasts. But the only way to get to know this precious and important place is from the bottom.

Please join Perry Mason and me on Carleton’s 8th Grand Canyon adventure as we follow in the wake of explorer John Wesley Powell into the bottom—down the Colorado River.

From the rim the river looks small and featureless. There is little sign of the experience that awaits you: the rippled sand dunes, the brilliant cliffs and rocky slopes where traces of prehistoric people can be found, the polished rocks along the river, the living water, and the sounds of bird, wind, and silence.

Just as the river can only be seen from a few points on the rim, so the rim is only occasionally visible from the river, and then it is only the most distant in the stairstep succession of cliffs rising out of the inner gorges. After a few days you almost forget what is beyond those distant cliffs; they become the outer limits of your microcosmos, a backdrop for soaring ravens and hawks. Face to face with some of nature’s most stunning manifestations, affairs of the outside world recede into perspective, trivial in comparison to the fundamental importance of what lies around the next bend in your wild river highway.

Yes, there are rapids, some of the biggest in North America. We will marvel at the skill of our boatmen, and help to keep the boats upright among the waves, and yes, it is exhilarating, and sometimes a bit scary. But what bring me back time and again is the opportunity to spend time in the Grand Canyon, to listen to the quiet before dawn, to the descending trill of the Canyon Wren, to learn again, by measuring it with my feet, how big the canyon is, and to experience the places that can only be reached from the river; each like no other, and each working its ineffable magic.

I look forward to traveling with you and sharing with you my love of the canyon and its amazing rocks.

If you have any questions before you sign up, or after, please do not hesitate to contact me at 508-540-5432 or by e-mail at anasazi@cape.com

All the best,

Beth Schwarzman ’66