Michigan Archaeological Society  
Upper Grand Valley Chapter

December 7, 2011  
6:30 p.m.  
Baker Hall Room 454

Speaker: Ms. Alexandra Conell

“Of the People, By the People, For the People:  
Archaeology at Fort Michilimackinac”

The epitome of public archaeology, the past 53 seasons of archaeological excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, in Mackinaw City, Michigan, have revealed volumes about the largest eighteenth-century fur trade entrepot in the Great Lakes region. About two-thirds of the fort has been excavated to date, with co-emphases on research and on making archaeology accessible to the public. The more than one million artifacts found on this project speak to issues of dietary preferences, religious practices, trade activities, military operations, consumerist tendencies, and survival amidst the inter-ethnic negotiations of identity. Effectively communicating to guests the lifeways of the traders, soldiers, and families who occupied Fort Michilimackinac and their interactions with the local indigenous populations is equally as important as studying the historic documents and archaeological record in order to understand their cultures and frontier adaptations. This presentation will focus on the 2011 excavations at House E of the fort’s Southeast Rowhouse and the significance of this work for professional archaeologists and the public alike. Architectural features, artifacts, and the unique situation of archaeology at Fort Michilimackinac will be discussed in the context of the ongoing project.