



'Raiders of the Lost Ark,' first released in 1981, will be shown at the Mahaiwe on May 28.

From film to fiber

Actor, fiber artist Karen Allen will discuss 'Raider's of the Lost Ark' at Mahaiwe

By Josh O'Gorman

GREAT BARRINGTON—Actress and businesswoman Karen Allen will receive the Berkshire Entrepreneurial Award on June 6 for her business—Barrington-based Karen Allen Fiber Arts—where she makes cashmere products such as hats, sweaters, blankets and shawls. Wearing another hat on Monday, May 28 she will appear in person to present a movie she co-starred in, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" at 7 p.m. at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center. She will also hold a question and answer session with the audience after the show.

While the path from stage and screen to clothing production might at first glance seem

unusual, in many ways Allen has come full circle in her life.

Her interest in knitting long predates her acting career. She began knitting at the age of five, and by the time she was a teenager was attending the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

"I liked to knit, liked to make things, but the Fashion Institute was all about the business end of things," Allen said. "I was 18 or 19, and I wasn't ready to make that kind of commitment."

Early in her life she fell into acting and later was cast in the John Landis film "Animal House."

This break led to her most iconic role as

Marion Ravenwood in "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

While she says she never felt like she was in danger during the filming of "Raiders," she did once find herself stranded in the Sahara Desert after the car she and actor John Rhys-Davies were riding in broke down.

"The driver just got out and walked away," she recalled.

"John pulled a bottle of whiskey out of his pocket and we just drank and looked at the stars." The driver did return, hours later.

As for rumors that she will star in the upcoming fourth Indiana Jones movie, Allen says,

Continued on B4

From film to fiber

Continued from B1

"It's just a rumor. It sounds great to me, but it's still at the rumor stage."

In addition to her time stranded in the desert, there was also some excitement while shooting the burning bar scene.

"There was a moment, during the bar scene, when the fire got a little out of control," Allen said.

Of working with director Stephen Spielberg, she said, "We were very different in our approaches to filmmaking, but we came together in the end."

After a few years of making films, Allen said she longed to return to the stage.

"Films are not an actor's medium," she said. "[In film] the director takes the footage and creates the performance. In a play, the actors create the performance."

She began acting locally with the Berkshire Theater Festival in Stockbridge with playwright Bill Gibson, who

later recommended Allen to director Arthur Penn to play the role of Helen Keller in a new play, "Monday After the Miracle."

Allen says now that the role of Helen Keller was the most difficult of her career. In addition to having to simulate the loss of sight and hearing, she had to approximate the vocal patterns of Keller.

While trying to reproduce Keller's voice, Allen ruptured a vocal cord, and she came to Great Barrington to recuperate under the supervision of Kristin Linklater, a voice trainer.

Allen worked with Linklater 4-5 hours a day, and during her downtime toured the area by bicycle.

She fell in love with the area, and after searching several years found the home she wanted.

She divided her time between the Berkshires and New York, eventually deciding to settle here full-time and five years ago opened Karen Allen Fiber Arts.