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attractive quality furniture that would last; they now saw it as worth the investment.

Although Karma does design some of it in house, the furniture JK Creative Wood sells from their gallery is made by Amish friends. Rather than rely on Amish factories in Ohio or Indiana, the Brokaws commission craftsmen closer to home. This provides them the ability to talk with the craftsmen directly and have furniture made precisely how the customer wants it without incurring extra charges. A factory, Karma explains, would charge additional fees to customize a table height, for example. That is not the case for craftsmen who primarily make to order.

One of the perks of the increase in sales volume is that the furniture on display in the gallery – dining and bedroom sets, for example – can now be sold right off the floor so customers don't have to wait for pieces to be built.

"For a couple of years, I wouldn't even sell the stock off the floor, because I just needed it," Karma explains. "One of the biggest changes is being able to sell things off the floor." "People were wonderful about waiting, and patient. We were

so impressed," she adds about the many customers who did wait a few months for their furniture orders to be completed.

Joel and Karma themselves deliver furniture orders to states bordering Iowa, and sometimes further away if their schedule allows. For orders destined for more distant states such as those on the coasts, shipping and delivery can be arranged.

When asked if furniture sales have tapered off as we enter 2023, Karma reports that they really have not.

Perhaps valuing home, valuing quality, and supporting local craftsmen are changes we've made that will endure.

*JK Creative Wood reflects the work of six generations of woodworkers, beginning with Karma's great-great grandfather and continuing with the Brokaw's children and grandchildren. Visit their gallery and workshop at 2410 105th Street, Kalona to learn more about their heritage, see where they make their home and office accessories, and shop for furniture and gifts. Open Mon-Sat 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; reach them at 319-656-3990 or online at jkcreative-wood.com.*



CHERYL ALLEN/THE NEWS

The team at JK Creative Wood. Back: Joel Brokaw, Riley Hochstedler, Elis Vizcarrondo, and Jackson Brokaw. Front: Karma Brokaw, Valor Graber (age 3), Keilah Graber, and Shawna Borntager. Jackson's dog: Ellie. Missing: Ethan Gingrich.

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