

AT HOME IN THIS WORLD



Gloria admires her ornament hanging on the Phillippi family Christmas tree, an ornament that helps mark her new life with her new family in Douglas.

After years-long effort to bring Gloria to U.S., personal ornament brings it all home for her



2016

Vol. 130 No. 51

By JEN KOCHER jen@douglas-budget.com

By the end of this week, Danny Martinez and his team of six local UPS drivers will have driven nearly 8,000 miles, made 4,100 stops and delivered as many as 4,000 packages just this week alone. They will have maxed out their 60-hour allotted work week and, with the help of a couple alternate drivers and a few part-time helpers, they will have safely delivered Christmas packages to nearly every family in the vicinity from Douglas to Esterbrook to the surrounding communities of Glendo, Lusk and Bill.

Many will return from work exhausted, and there's a good chance that during this week some of those drivers will grow weary and several tempers will flare.

But, according to 36-year veteran driver Danny Martinez, it just part of what constitutes the 'peak' Christmas

Please see **UPS**, page A-3

Willox tapped as Wyoming commissioners assoc. teasurer

Wyoming's County Commissioners

By JEN KOCHER jennifer@douglas-budget.com

loria can't walk past the Phillippi family Christmas tree without stopping to admire her new ornament. 'Me," she says, pointing to a colorful globe hanging on a branch at eyelevel on which a dark-skinned angel soars above the world. She turns the ornament in her hand to get a better look at the angel, that she notes, looks a lot like herself.

Sara nods and smiles from her spot on the couch.

She's still new at recognizing herself, Sara explains. Up until a few months ago, she'd lived without mirrors in the orphanage in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she'd spent the first three years of her life – until being adopted by the Phillippis last March. Since arriving in Douglas, Gloria spends a lot of time scrolling through pictures of herself on Sara's phone. Then, she runs to the mirror and giggles.

as a symbol of hope during the long threeyear period they waited for Gloria's exit papers to clear. To have this ornament now hanging on the family tree is a blessing that none of them takes lightly, especially as Gloria spins it in her hand, marveling at her likeness.

It's been a year of transitions for the family, some easier than

others. Weather was initially a hard one. Back in pre-school at Head Start where she socializes March the snow scared her and she would scream whenever Sara tried to put a hat on her head or zip up her coat. Today, however, she's excited for snow and asks to go outside and play in it. Food

The ornament was a gift from one of Sara's was a bit tricky at first but in the past nine months youth fellowship students and was given to them she's adopted a healthy appetite and has grown quickly.

Jen Kocher photos

Communication,

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Association members elected new leaders including Converse County's Jim Willox – at its winter meeting earlier this month in Lusk.

Natrona County Commissioner Rob Hendry was elected

as the 2017-2018 president, taking the reins from Richard Ladwig of Niobrara County. Laramie County Commissioner Troy Thompson was elected vice president, and longtime Converse County



JIM WILLOX

Commissioner Willox was tapped to serve as treasurer.

Hendry has served as a county commissioner since 2007 and was WCCA vice president for the last two years.

Please see **WILLOX**, page A-8

A Rotary-ínspíred holíday surpríse for December

By SANDRA MUDD sandra@douglas-budget.com

very merry December received an early visit from Santa last Thursday night as part of the Douglas Rotary Club's annual gift giving charity.

Who says Santa only comes down the chimney? Sometimes he even makes a personal visit to a four-plex apartment building where 7-year-old December Matter lives with her family.

In their festively decorated apartment, complete with a brightly lit Christmas

tree, December's mom and dad stand across the room, with dad's arm draped across mom's shoulders. They smile and watch December sitting next to Santa on the couch in her pj's as she watches with big eyes as Santa pulls out six presents

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A-2 Douglas Budget, Douglas, Wyoming Wednesday, December 21, 2016



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Since arriving, she's grown nearly four inches and has put on several pounds. Her malaria is gone and save for a left drooping eyelid that doctors say will eventually have to be operated on when she's older, she's thriving and enjoys wrestling with her new brothers, 4-year-old brother Caleb and Jacob,



The bonds of a family supercede skin color and origin of birth, according to the Phillippis, who are just happy for the opportunity to raise Gloria in a loving family in the warm community of Douglas.

especially true for Caleb who treats her like one of the boys.

from the front page

This afternoon, after a morning apart, Gloria, dressed for ballet class in her black body suit and frosty pink tights, wrestles with Caleb in the corner of the kitchen as the two wobble like tops before collapsing into a pile of knees and elbows, which sets off a frenzy of ear-splitting giggles as the two race from the living room to the kitchen and back again - until a near miss with the Christmas tree shuts the game down. They settle together on the Oriental carpet at Sara's feet with a wooden puzzle.

This is quiet time, she explains to them, the brief calm before the next proverbial storm. In an hour, "Jacob gets home from school, followed by husband Carsten, a math teacher at Douglas Middle School, as the family switches over to night with a whole new list of activities and schedules that can get a little confusing.

But it works, she laughs with both hands on her newly emerged pregnant belly, especially now that she's through her first trimester. Another unexpected gift to round out the year. The kids are excited about their new sister, she says - even Gloria, who initially had a hard time sharing Sara with her siblings after having spent her life without a mother. It look some time to set those boundaries, and now they are working on Gloria's sleeping patterns, which are pretty erratic.

She sleeps soundly from bedtime to about midnight or 2 a.m. at which point she wakes up ready to play and doesn't understand why her parents or brothers might want to get some sleep. Sleep in general, for Gloria, is akin to an acrobatic performance as she flops and turns like a porpoise, to the point where now she sleeps in her own room with her toys at the ready for her late-night play sessions

They're still transitioning, Sara smiles, marveling more at the welcoming from community mem-

December

from the front page

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December just celebrated her birthday on the 10th of this month and this second round of gifts from Santa is an unexpected delight.

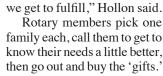
She is all smiles as she stacks her presents under the tree with the handful of others in anticipation of the big day. Bringing joy to children is

what it is all about, according to Rotary Committee Chair Blake Hollon, who heads up

the Rotarians' yearly effort to bring cheer to families in need.

Going on more than 22 years of delivering an early Christmas to local families, Hollon says the Rotarians collect the names from applicants who have signed up for the Noel's Christmas Giving program – people who think their children might like a visit from Santa.

"We are a service organization, and this is just another community service



Three Santas made their way around town on Dec. 15 with maps Hollon created, handing out gifts like warm coats, hats and gloves, and special requested items to 36 children, all along 17 stops that only took each "Santa" around an hour and half to deliver.



Phillip Harnden photos

December Matter, 7, excitedly looks at the presents she received from Santa and his elves during the Douglas Rotarians' annual Christmas package delivery Dec. 15.

Man allegedly uses shotgun to settle religious argument, facing charges

By SANDRA MUDD sandra@douglas-budget.com

An argument over religious beliefs that escalated into an aggravated assault and battery charge has a Douglas man facing up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine, if convicted.

The case began when Douglas police officers were called to a residence on 4th Street in late November for a disturbance.

After talking to the victim, police were informed that Andrew Cain and the victim had gotten into an argument over religious beliefs and that Cain had allegedly become angry, started yelling and calling the victim names. He then allegedly placed the loaded shotgun on her chest and told her to get out of the residence, according to records filed in Converse County Circuit Court.



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After Cain agreed to let the officers see the gun, they saw at least one shell in the magazine, police allege.

Cain is out on a 10 percent down payment of his \$10,000 cash bond. His next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 27.



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Caleb and Gloria join forces to piece together a puzzle on a wintery December afternoon. The two 4 year olds have become close friends and playmates in the months since Gloria has joined the Phillippi family.

On behalf of Converse County Aging Services, Inc., we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the A PERSONAL AND A REPORT **KNISELY FAMILY FOUNDAT** for its generous donation. This contribution will be used to supplement the home services program which prevents long term care institutionalization. The mission of the Knisely Family Foundation is to assist in building strong communities. Its generosity is truly appreciated!

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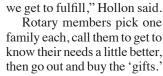
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