



**By Russ Pankonin**

***The Imperial Republican***

After x-rays showed no broken bones, Dirk Hill and his family thought he luckily escaped serious injury after being pinned against a fence by a car on Sept. 28.

But two days later, when his left calf was huge from swelling, he knew something wasn't right. What wasn't right turned out to be a blood clot in his left calf.

Instead of running Hill's Family Foods, he found himself stuck at home, under doctor's orders to stay off the leg completely.

He just returned to work a couple of weeks ago and feels he's slowly on the mend.

### **Could have been much worse**

Looking back at the incident that occurred at the Longhorn football field as the Mitchell-Chase County game was beginning, Hill said it could have been much worse.

Hill, his wife and family were walking up to the field on the sidewalk north of the main entrance. They stopped as a car driven by Jean Welch of Champion was pulling up to park. Apparently, instead of hitting the brake, she stepped on the accelerator.

Hill grabbed his daughter, Jaiden, 7, as the car began moving toward them.

They continued to back away from the car but ended up pinned between the chain link fence and the car while the car remained in gear.

Brad Moline, who had just finished catering a tailgate party, saw what happened. He then pulled Mrs. Welch from behind the wheel and backed up the car.

When emergency people arrived, Hill said he heard the word "compound," so he figured he had a broken leg for sure.

Both he and his daughter were transported by Imperial EMS to the hospital.

Jaiden suffered some bruising and a sprained ankle but no serious injuries. Despite being sore and bruised, it appeared Hill had escaped injury, as well.

After parking in the school parking lot that night, Dirk said he just intended to carry the couple's one-year-old twins.

His wife, Rhonda, opted for the stroller instead. That proved to be a good thing, Hill said, because otherwise, he'd have been carrying one of the twins.

While the car clipped the stroller slightly, the twins were unharmed. The car also nicked their other daughter, Carissa, a fifth grader, knocking her down but she, too, escaped injury.

Fortunately, there was a fence there, Hill said, or the car could have come right on over them. Plus, they got pinned between the car and fence rather than a pole just two feet away.

### **On the mend**

Specialists at the North Platte hospital put Hill on blood thinners immediately after seeing him and kept him overnight.

When he was released, he couldn't be on the leg for two weeks while the clot dissolved.

On Oct. 25, he had an MRI on his ankle to ensure there was no additional injury in that area.

Now, it's just a matter of time as he rehabs the leg back into shape.

Hill couldn't say enough about his employees and his mother, Joyce, who stepped in to cover while he was stuck at home.

Ironically, his dad, Ansel, had surgery earlier in the week that Dirk got hurt, so he was out of the store, as well.

Everybody has been awesome, Hill said, referring to the neighborliness in Imperial.

"Only in a small town would you get that," he said.

He said people brought over meals while others came over to mow his lawn.

He said workers at Imperial Super Foods have also come over on truck day to help unload their supplies of groceries.

"It's just been awesome," he reiterated.