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My Smartwatch Fiasco

For many years, as a confirmed troglodyte, I procrastinated buying a cellphone, but eventually gave in to the inevitable. I have now become quite attached to my Pixel8a, a smartphone of the Android variety. Particularly now that I no longer have a landline phone. It often comes out of its holster at mealtimes, to resolve some issue arising in conversations with my table-mates.

I also had procrastinated on purchasing a smartwatch, but around the middle of November I succumbed to the lure of being able to count my daily steps and to watch my blood pressure. So, off to Googling to see what was available for such a watch with at least those features. It looked like the best candidate was a **Gard Pro Health Smartwatch 2** at a price of \$73.98, with free shipping but with a \$3.81 charge for shipping insurance. So, I placed an order for one of those on November 16.

And I soon received an e-mail: **Order #7942901 confirmed**, time-stamped 08:48 that day. Which, two minutes later, 08:51, was followed by **Order #7942921 confirmed**. *Two watches!*

Oops, not at all my intention! I suspect the reason for this was because the Gard Pro web page for making a purchase had a split screen. This allowed me (and perhaps people other than me) to click *both* of the Confirm Purchase buttons, one on each half of the split screens.

Well, I was not interested in getting two watches, just one. So I quickly (it was now 09:12) dropped an e-mail to the Gard Pro Support people, explaining the problem. They responded surprisingly quickly (09:56) saying that they had already started processing the *first* order, 7942901. Its shipping was already under way and couldn't be changed. However, they *were* able to *cancel* the second order, 7942921, and my credit card would be refunded for that purchase. Whew, problem solved!

Unfortunately, not the only problem. The next day, November 17, Gard Pro sent me an e-mail saying that the expected delivery of watch 7942901 should arrive on or before November 25. They included a Track Your Order button, so I tried clicking that. It spins its wheels on my screen for a while and then stops. The software *failed* to track it!

I don't know why. Perhaps Gard Pro's software can't handle Linux, which is what my desktop computer runs? So, on November 25, I tried an experiment of transferring the e-mail with the Track Your Order button to my Pixel8a Android phone. From there

the button works! *Unfortunately*, it said the shipment, which was originating from someplace in China, was going to Brookdale, my *old* address in Santa Fe, New Mexico. *Not* to Porter Hills Village, my *present* address in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Damn. This had happened to me before, on *another* on-line order earlier this year (see Paddle Fiasco.pdf). Perhaps this was because *somebody's* computer *somewhere* associates the old shipping address with the credit card I used for the order(s) that I made with Gard Pro on November 16. In view of my previous bad shipping experience, I had diligently corrected the shipping address on *one* of the two Gard Pro orders. However, that was done for order 7942921, which was the one that Gard Pro canceled! Moreover, my correction did *not* carry over to the other, earlier order, 7942901, which was the one that was *not* canceled. So the watch was definitely going to Santa Fe.

Okay, what to do? Obviously, I initiated another exchange of e-mails with Gard Pro Support. But, first, I called the Front Desk at Brookdale to see if a package for me had already showed up. Annette, who answered (and who remembers me!), said no such package had arrived yet. But if it did, she would try to have the delivery person send it back to Gard Pro for a refund. I also called my friend Lora, a Brookdale resident whom I knew well. She would be happy to mail me that package, *if* it came and ended up on the delivered-package table. I would, of course, re-imburse her if she did, but so far she has never found any such package.

So what came of the e-mail correspondence with Gard Pro Support? That same day (November 25 at 07:57) I sent them a letter telling them about the mis-shipment and what I was asking of the people at Brookdale. I was surprised by their prompt afternoon response apologizing for this new problem. *Their solution was most generous* – they were sending me, at the Grand Rapids address, a separate Health Smartwatch 2 *at no additional charge!* In fact, they were also including a screen protector for the watch, also for free. To verify this I received at 18:32 that evening an e-mail saying **Order #7963101 Confirmed**. It showed a total cost to me of \$0.00.

Wow! And at 20:26 that same evening another e-mail told me a shipment for all that was already on the way. It included, of course, a new tracking number. In fact, it was already in transit by 14:27 the next day, November 26. One can certainly say that the Gard Pro Support people were doing an excellent job for keeping me informed. All I had to do now was to await the watch's arrival at my Porter Hills mailbox with an estimated delivery time sometime between November 29 and December 2.

It hadn't arrived by then, so I e-mailed Gard Pro on December 3 to see if there was some problem there. They replied saying it was "on they way" and that I should monitor its progress by clicking on the Track Your Order button. Doing so, I discovered that the package had gotten to Melrose Park, Illinois, near Chicago, where it sat for a

while, before being sent over to O'Hare. It evidently had to go through customs for some reason. (Did it also come from China?) And then back to Melrose Park on December 4, where it waited a while until the USPS picked it up. It was finally in my mailbox by Saturday afternoon, December 6. Whew, again!

This ends the chapter on the watch delivery. The next chapter is what happened after I opened the package that didn't fill my small mailbox.

The box containing my watch contained a charger for its battery and a piece of paper that had a QR code for web access to a User Manual. OK, I had installed a QR code reader on my phone some time back, but hadn't used it much. Turning it on and hovering its camera view over the code, I clicked to take the picture. Oh mi gosh! All hell broke loose on the Pixel8a. In fact, *all* the icons I had carefully installed on its home page(s) had disappeared! There were only the five ones at the bottom of the page which are built-in: Phone, Messages, Search, Google, and Camera. With a lot of effort, I was able to drag back into *my* homepage screen the icons for the apps that I frequently use. But other things on the phone were also messed up, but I won't bore you with details about that.

Since the QR code app on my phone didn't work, I went directly on the web browser to the URL code printed beneath the QR Box. It displayed something *like* a user manual, a set of six pages starting with a "Congratulations." I printed them out. Those pages basically only told me what wonderful things the Health-2 watch *can* do, but it gave no information on *how* to set up the watch to *do* any of them.

Hmm. After staring at the black-faced watch, I found a red button on its side. On pressing it, the watch turned on (!) and displayed, in blue, something that *might* be the time (in military style) and date. They were, however, *not at all* what the Grand Rapids time and date were. And that blue-face almost immediately switched back to its former uninformative black face.

So, how *does* one set the watch to display the correct time and date and to not disappear so quickly? After all, as my friend Peggy said, "What good is a watch if it doesn't tell you the time?" No clue from the User Manual about how to proceed. Well, in my experiences with other devices, there is usually a "gear icon" called "Settings." But I couldn't find anything like that during my very brief times when the blue-face was on.

OK, another e-mail to Gard Pro Support. They replied that I *could* find the "gear icon" by simply swiping down on the blue-face display. Yes! and why didn't *I* think of that? Doing so and tapping on the gear, it brought up a small menu saying I could:

- a) Select a different watch-face,

- b) Change the brightness of the display,
- c) Get information about the firmware version, Bluetooth number, etc.
- d) Reset the watch to factory settings.

But *nothing* about setting the time or any other of the promised Health-2 features.

More e-mails with Support. This time they eventually said the watch would get the local time and date from my mobile phone. I needed to turn on Bluetooth on my phone, search for the Gard Pro watch, and pair them up. And, perhaps most important, to get and install an app on the phone called GloryFit. (**Disclosure:** if I had read past page two of the user manual I had printed out, I would have *already* known about Glory Fit and the things it could do.)

Anyway, I did as I was told and got and installed GloryFit on the Pixel8a. Then, on opening the app, it displayed a screen asking me to register with them. To do that, there was a “Gotcha” that asked me to get a verification code it would send to my e-mail. Clicking that button, the phone spun its wheels for a while and then quit. It apparently could not get to the web page that would generate one. Despite my working WiFi. And, nothing ever appeared in my e-mail with such a six-digit code.

OK, back to Support. This time they said I really didn’t *have* to register with GloryFit. In the upper right-hand I should click on a button that said “Ignore.” I did that and GloryFit did proceed to display its home page and a few icons for navigating within the app. And Holy Cow!, **suddenly** the Health-2 watch now displays the local time and date on the blue-face home screen!

Up to this point I had been seriously considering whether I should send the watch back to Gard Pro for a refund. But now I decided to see if I could see how to make the watch work for me.

As I said above, the GloryFit app on the phone allows a user to set up quite a few things on the watch. The first thing for me to do, of course, was to set the length of time to a more livable five seconds before the display screen reverts to black-face. Going further I have, as of December 13, enabled the watch to:

- a) Count steps taken (sofar) for the day and display the number..
- b) Display my body temperature.
- c) Calculate my blood pressure and blood oxygen percentage.
- d) Inform me by a vibration and a message if I have been sedentary for too long.

Those things *are* what I wanted to have when I went to buy the phone. So good!

There are probably *other* things the watch can do for me, but I’ll close this essay now and save for later to see what else I can get working. I apologize if I’ve given you many more details than you ever wanted to know.