

Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club

2020 CLUB OFFICERS

Pres: Bill Rascher - KT5TE

Vice Pres: Steve Bartlett-WB5IDY

Sec/Treas: Army Curtis - AE5P

Visit our web site at

<https://w5nac.com/>

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club is to support and promote Amateur Radio by public service, offering training to unlicensed interested parties and licensed Amateurs, mutual support of other Amateurs, engaging events that promote Amateur radio to the general public and other Amateur radio operators, and continuing fellowship by regularly scheduled organized meetings and events and having fun.



APRIL MINUTES

The April meeting of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club (NARC) was held as scheduled on April 1st. Because of the current 'Stay at Home' order, the meeting was held as a virtual meeting using 2 meters. **President Bill KT5TE** opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. on the club's 147.32 repeater. Thirteen members checked in. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published. The Treasurer's report was not available.

Members were encouraged to try their hands in the many contests, even if just

for a few contacts. Its wonderful practice and a great way to improve your abilities in Ham Radio.

The San Jacinto Day Special Event Station is scheduled for the weekend of April 25-26, using the special call sign K5T. Club members are encouraged to operate in this event from their home stations. Just be sure to inform AE5P of the time and Band/Mode you intend to operate. We need your help to make this a success.

The book raffle has been put on hold until we can resume regular meetings.

Field Day is scheduled for June 27-28. **President Bill KT5TE** appointed **Andy KE5EXX** as Field Day Chairman. Andy is expected to appoint other

chairmen for equipment, antennas, good, etc. and report back no later than the May meeting.

Army AE5P reported that VE testing has reluctantly been cancelled due to the shut-in order.

Meeting was closed at 7:14 p.m.

Program: Bill KT5TE presented a program following on to his program last month. Last month Bill described his computer hardware. This month he described his computer software, which is primarily Linux. Numerous questions were asked and Bill put out an email after the meeting giving source information on several different versions of Linux available for download.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cool Spring

Our spring is still wet and cool. In fact it has been so cool that our garden and flower beds plants just aren't growing.

The 45 goat kids are growing and are very entertaining. We still have one mama left to kid. Every now and then these crazy kids get into trouble. An example would be the critter that got her head stuck between the gate and fence post on the hinge side of the gate. We can't figure out how she could have possibly fit her head in a space that is half as wide as her head. Or even why she would try in the first place. Goats!!

By the way, goats don't like goat weeds, but they love poison ivy and poison oak. To a goat poison ivy is like ice cream. For next year I need to build a goat carrier to fit in

the bed of our side by side Kubota truck. I call it a truck because its GVW is 3660lbs. With a hydraulic lift bed that is about 4' x 4' I can put a lot of stranded kids in the back to haul up to the barns. The mama goats will not notice where the kids stop to take a nap. As the kids get older they can keep up and not need to nap so much.

Usually a large group of kids will stay by the barns with a young nanny for security. These barns are on skids so I can use my draft horse to move the barns instead of cleaning out the manure. Plus they're not taxed like a permanent barn. When I move the goats to a different pasture their barns follow.

Goats hate rain, and they need some protection from the cold and the wind. They don't have the body mass to survive cold wet weather like cattle or horses. Our draft horses have no problem in the cold, but summer heat can be tough. Any work, like pulling a barn, has to be done by 10:00am because

they can't get rid of the heat. During the summer when the horses are finished for the day they have to be hosed down and their harnesses need washing off to remove the sweat. Tuff and Gus are 18.2 hands high, without shoes, and over 2200lbs. As you can tell being stuck at home means plenty to do. :-)

Right now I'm trying to get my Hy-gain T2X rotator to work. This has been about 3 years of trouble and Army AE5P has been very helpful the first couple of times.

It probably would have been wiser to use a Rohn tower with guy wires instead of a Universal aluminum free standing tower. The Rohn is so much easier on the knees to climb. At each section joint the Universal has about a 2.5 foot step up, so I end up having to use my arms to pull up past the joint section instead of climbing with my legs. If you want to see what it is like try putting one foot on a table while hanging on to the lights

and stand up so the other foot is on the table too.

The height doesn't bother me, but swinging out one's body while climbing an aluminum moving tower does make me a bit nervous. If I would lose 20lbs it would be a bit easier, but the moving tower would still be unnerving. Maybe by next months' article I'll have a rotating TH-11DX antenna to talk about.

73, Bill KT5TE

bill@watershipfarm.com

FROM THE VP CHAIR

Were You Prepared?

Most of our friends know that we are moderate Preppers. Not quite to the concrete bunker, gas mask level, but enough to feel comfortable that some extended survival is possible if we encountered an "event". We have been slowly collecting food and necessity items for over 10 years. We now have enough food and general stores to last for over 6 months. Laugh if you will, but we still have a LOT of toilet paper on our shelves!

Not everybody subscribes to preparing for TEOTWAWKI (the end of the world as we know it), which is fine, but the recent COVID-19 episode should at least make you think that some preparations are a good idea.

The type of "event" will dictate what stores are valuable. It may be

batteries, or it may just be toilet paper, but having the ability to stay home, without traveling at all, for an extended period is quite frankly just smart living.

Events can range from storms, with power outages, blocked roadways and flooding, to pandemics or a complete power grid failure. Sometimes several less significant events that happen simultaneously can also trigger panic and the need to either evacuate or hunker down at home.

Consider acquiring enough food and water to live for two (2) weeks. This food would be pantry safe (not refrigerated) and have a multiyear shelf life. Canned goods and low moisture dry goods, like beans and rice, can meet this criteria. Vacuum sealing pasta, beans, and rice in bags or canning jars can greatly extend their life. Heat, moisture, and light are the three things that degrade most all food storage items. By the way, Pop tarts last forever, but what a way to die.

An upgrade to such a storage plan would include freeze dried items in No. 10 cans that are commercially sold by a number of companies. Pasta dishes, meats, cheese, fruits, and vegetables are all available in this packaging and store well at the back of that lower kitchen cabinet you never open. They generally have a 25 year shelf life. Similar dried foods are also available in sealed Mylar bags and often sold as food for backpackers.

Regular canned goods and dry goods can be rotated for use. Having 20 cans of tuna instead of two or three, and using the oldest one for dinner while replacing it with a new one from the store, helps make your storage scheme affordable and practical. The same principle applies to toilet paper, bandages, and medicine.

Some tips to remember:

- (1) If the public water supply is off, remember your water heater holds

40 gallons of drinkable water - turn it off, open the pressure relief valve to let air in, and open the hose connection at the bottom.

- (2) Your toilet will flush by just pouring water into the bowl. If you can, fill the bathtub with water before an event and dip water into the toilet until it flushes by siphon. Wash water or other non-potable water can also be used.

- (3) Your gas grill makes a great stove and oven. Always keep a full propane bottle (or two) in the garage.

- (4) A simple folding camping fire grate or a grate from your gas grill and a few old bricks, make a good fire pit for cooking and warmth.

- (5) LED lanterns give more light for the

least amount of power. Always have a couple handy with fresh batteries. Avoid using fuel based lanterns in the house.

- (6) Eight (8) drops of bleach per gallon can sanitize non-potable water. Boiling water and filtering with a cloth before adding bleach is even safer.

I'll leave the discussion of firearms and ample ammunition stores for another day.

Lastly, and it should go without saying, always have a multi-band HT with extra batteries, charged up and handy. Some of the varieties made in China, double as an FM radio and a Weather radio. They are well worth the \$30 investment, even if you only use it during the zombie apocalypse.

I am not a Mormon, but the LDS folks have one of the better comprehensive guides to preparations, available for free. It has

a few LDS overtones, but in general it is a very good guide. You can download their manual at:

<https://28748o49yryp4y6wa1ngl3u1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/LDSPrep-V8.pdf>

73, Steve WB5IDY

bartlett.steve58@gmail.com

NOTES FROM OUR EC

Let's do SKYWARN this month. Yes I know many of my columns lean toward SKYWARN and the weather, but one leads into the other sometimes.

Where is he, where is he, oh he's over there, Aaron, KI5FIQ, stand up and be recognized. 22 April that afternoon turned into a pretty grumpy weather day. Tornadoes in the East Texas region, Tornado Watches and Warnings with a storm track following TX21 right through Nacogdoches. Aaron activated a SKYWARN Net during the event. Kudos to him and to everyone else who answered the call.

Unfortunately I was up to my ears at the mill helping coordinate our storm effort, I had 4 radios running at once. We had 2 inches of rain and nickel sized hail. And please keep the folks over in Onalaska in your thoughts and prayers.

I tracked the storm using the company computer through the NWS and weather.com. I did not light up my smartphone app as I needed a bigger screen to work from.

What apps are you using to monitor weather, follow radar tracks and the like? There are a number of them out there. My FCC radar buddy, who also maintains the TAMU weather radar, uses RadarScope on his Android device. Let's get a dialogue started, what ya got? How well does it work, is it free, is there a one-time fee, or is it subscription, what are you using on your computer? Email me! Email address will be posted at the end of this missive. Results to be posted next month.

We'll close this month's column with a shameless plug. SKYWARN training is available via the Shreveport NWS site (again URL at the end). If you missed going to any of the on-site classes, well here's your chance. As it

is on-line, you can do it at your leisure.

Next month to steal from an HBO series. Hurricane Season 2020 is coming. What are they saying? Are you ready?

Ya'll stay safe, mask up, glove up, maintain your distance and don't let em grind you down.

KC5MIB@arrl.net

<https://www.weather.gov/skywarn/>

ARES/RACES Net:

Mondays 8:00 pm local time, 146.84, 141.3, neg offset.

SKYWARN Net:

Thursdays 8:00 pm local time. 147.32, 141.3, positive offset.

73 de John Chapman
KC5MIB

kc5mib@arrl.net

VE TESTING

Our VE testing originally scheduled for **Wednesday May 20** has been cancelled due to the Wuhan virus.

<https://w5nac.com/about/testing/>

73 de AE5P.

email: ae5p@arrl.net

TWO METER CLUB NETS

Remember to join us each week for the two meter nets sponsored by NARC. Each **MONDAY** is the **NARC ARES/RACES** net, at 8:00 p.m. on the club's 146.84 repeater (PL 141.3). Second, on **THURSDAY** evenings at 8:00 p.m. is the **Deep East Texas Skywarn Emergency Weather Net** on the 147.32 repeater (PL 141.3). Please join us for one or both.

BOOK RAFFLE

The monthly book raffle is being postponed until we are again able to resume our normal meetings at Christ Episcopal School.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be a virtual on-air meeting **Wednesday May 6th at 7:00 p.m.** on the 147.320 repeater (PL 141.3). All stations participating are asked to check-in giving their callsign and name when asked for. An on-air program is planned.

SAN JACINTO DAY SPECIAL EVENT OPERATION

The weekend of April 25-26, NARC held its annual San Jacinto Day Special Event. We used the special callsign K5T and a number of club members and guests operated from their home stations. I want to thank WB5IDY, W5NRF, KI5FIQ, K5ME, N6RH, W5TV, KT5TE, KOYY, K5KRK, and AE5P for their participation.

When all the dust had settled, the group racked up 1,022 contacts using 160, 80, 40, 30, 20 and 17 meters, running SSB, CW, FT8 and FT4. Most stations ran 100 watts. At least 1 station ran more.

The final log was uploaded to LOTW on Tuesday April 28. Later that same day I received almost 400 QSL's back from LOTW. In the meantime, the paper QSL's are arriving daily in the mail box, but

I'm convinced LOTW is the ONLY way to go.

Again, many, many thanks to the members and guests who helped with this. There is no way one person can do this alone.

Many of the stations I worked seemed very pleased at the history behind this day, and were delighted to learn a little of the history of Texas. This event is a great way to spread knowledge of Texas history, and to have a lot of fun in the process.

Just wait until next year!

73,

Army AE5P

ae5p@arrl.net

UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE

Mark your calendars for the following events coming up in the next few months. Full information on these events and much more can be found at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Note that all dates shown here are local, CST dates while all contest logging uses UTC dates and times.

CQ WW WPX, CW

May 30-31, 2020

<http://www.cqwpw.com/rules.htm>

ARRL JUNE VHF

June 13-15, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf>

ARRL FIELD DAY

June 27-28, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/field-day>

CQ WW VHF

Jul 18-19, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

NAQP, CW

Aug 1, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

NAQP, SSB

Aug 15, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

ARRL ROOKIE ROUNDUP RTTY

Aug 26, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>

WORLD WIDE DIGI DX

Aug 29-30, 2020

<https://ww-digi.com/>

ARRL SEPTEMBER VHF

Sept 12-13, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/september-vhf>

CQ WW RTTY

Sept 26-27, 2020

<http://www.cqwwrtty.com/>

CQ WW SSB

Oct 24-25, 2020

<http://www.cqww.com/rules.htm>

ARRL SS CW

Nov 7-9, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes>

ARRL SS SSB

Nov 21-22, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes>

CQ WW CW

Nov 28-29, 2020

<http://www.cqww.com/rules.htm>

THE MAGIC BAND

by

Thomas Atchison W5TV

Many people refer to the six meter band (50 - 54 MHz) as the Magic Band because it can act like an HF band at times and like a VHF band at other times. Technically, since it is above 30 MHz, it is a VHF band; however, at times you can work stations all over the world like an HF band.

Let's look at some of the modes of propagation. Normally you can work stations within a 100 - 125 mile radius, depending on your power and antenna. As we approach the months of May through July we can have what is called Sporadic-E propagation. Even though we think of this time of year as the 'season' for sporadic-E skip, it can happen anytime of the year. It is called **E-skip** because the signals are reflected back to earth by the E-layer of ionization. It is called **sporadic** because it can last for a few minutes or a few hours and it can be very directional. If you have a single hop (reflection) you might get up to 1400 miles and if you have multiple hops the distance can be 5000 miles or more. Signals are often strong even with low power and a small antenna.

As we get in the next sunspot cycle and the sunspots are high we have more ionization of the F-layer and that layer may be able to reflect 6 meter signals. In this case, 6 meters may be better than HF bands for DX work because noise from atmospheric sources is lower. This F-layer propagation will come later in the next cycle.

There is also Auroral propagation, however, we don't benefit much from that here. There is another possibility however, called **meteor scatter**. When meteors enter the Earth's atmosphere, they ionize a small trail through the E-layer. This ionization may last for several seconds and provide the ability for 50 MHz signals to be reflected back to Earth. Communicating using this method of propagation requires much patience but it can be done and it's kind of fun.

Now let's talk about the frequencies that are used for various modes of communication on 6 meters. First, CW is exclusive from 50.0 to 50.100 MHz. Most CW operation occurs at the top end of this range. SSB starts at 50.100 MHz; however, the frequencies from 50.100 to 50.125 MHz are usually reserved for DX operation. The frequency of 50.125 is considered the SSB calling frequency for stations in the US. If you want to listen for activity this is good frequency to monitor. Common courtesy

suggests that stations move off the calling frequency once contact is established. The 6 meter AM calling frequency is 50.400 MHz.

With the introduction of digital activity we have the popular FT8 mode that usually populates 50.313 MHz. Meteor scatter uses the MSK144 digital mode and the usual place is 50.260 MHz.

FM activity begins at 51 MHz and several band segments are used for repeater inputs and outputs. The national simplex calling frequency for FM is 52.525 MHz.

I am sure there are other modes and activities on 6 meters but the ones I mentioned above are probably the most popular.

The internet is a good source of information regarding the status of propagation on 6 meters as well as other bands. For example DX Maps (www.dxmaps.com) will provide real time maps of recent contacts. Also, DX Summit (www.dxsummit.fi) can be used to set filters for mode and band so you get a report of activity related to your interests. If you have an interest in meteor scatter then I suggest going to Ping Jockey (www.pingjockey.net). This site will permit you to schedule meteor scatter contacts and it will show you activity.

Most HF radios have the 6 meter band as a part of their operation. That makes this an easy band to experiment with. As far as antennas are concerned you can use a dipole or a J-pole to get started, however it isn't too hard to build a 3 element yagi for 6 meters. If you do a search on the internet you will find many projects with step-by-step directions on how to build a simple antenna for 6 meters. A good book on this topic is "Magic Band Antennas for Ham Radio" by Bruce Walker, N3JO. This book is available from ARRL and it is worth having for your Amateur Radio Library.

This is a good time to get ready to work some stations on 6 meters. Please give me a call if you hear a KL7 on 6. Have FUN!

AUTOMATICALLY LOGGING WSJT-X CONTACTS TO N3FJP by Ralph Hollingshead N6RH

In order to auto log WSJT digital contacts into N3FJP, JTAlert must be running along with WSJT-X and N3FJP (ACLog).

Version numbers of the software on my system: (I am aware of later versions of some of these. Be my guest and try them, if you choose.)

N3FJP ACLog - 6.4

WSJT-X - v2.1.0

JTAlert - 2.14.5

First of all, there may be several ways to accomplish this task. The following discussion is how my system is set up. Yours may require something different.

My radio is the Flex 6600. As such, N3FJP and WSJT communicate with the radio through virtual com ports. Each program has its own port. In addition, they both have the capability of fetching data from QRZ.com, and N3FJP and JTAlert communicate with each other through a TCP API PORT 1100.

Here are the switch settings in each program:

In **N3FJP ACLog**, click on the Settings Tab at the top of the screen. This will open a drop down menu. Click the second from the bottom tab called - "Application Program Interface (API)". This will open a new window for setting up the API. Click on the box to Enable TCP API Server. The port should be 1100. Depending on your operating system, Windows may object and inform you that the Windows firewall is blocking ACLog from communicating. Read the note carefully. You are offered an option to let ACLog communicate on Private Networks. Click on that so Windows is satisfied and then continue by clicking Done in the ACLog API window.

In **JTAlert**, click on Settings, and then click on Manage Settings. This will bring up a window as shown in Figure 1 below. Click on Logging and then click on ACLog. Again referring to Figure 1, click on Enable ACLog Logging. Everything else should populate automatically, so click OK.

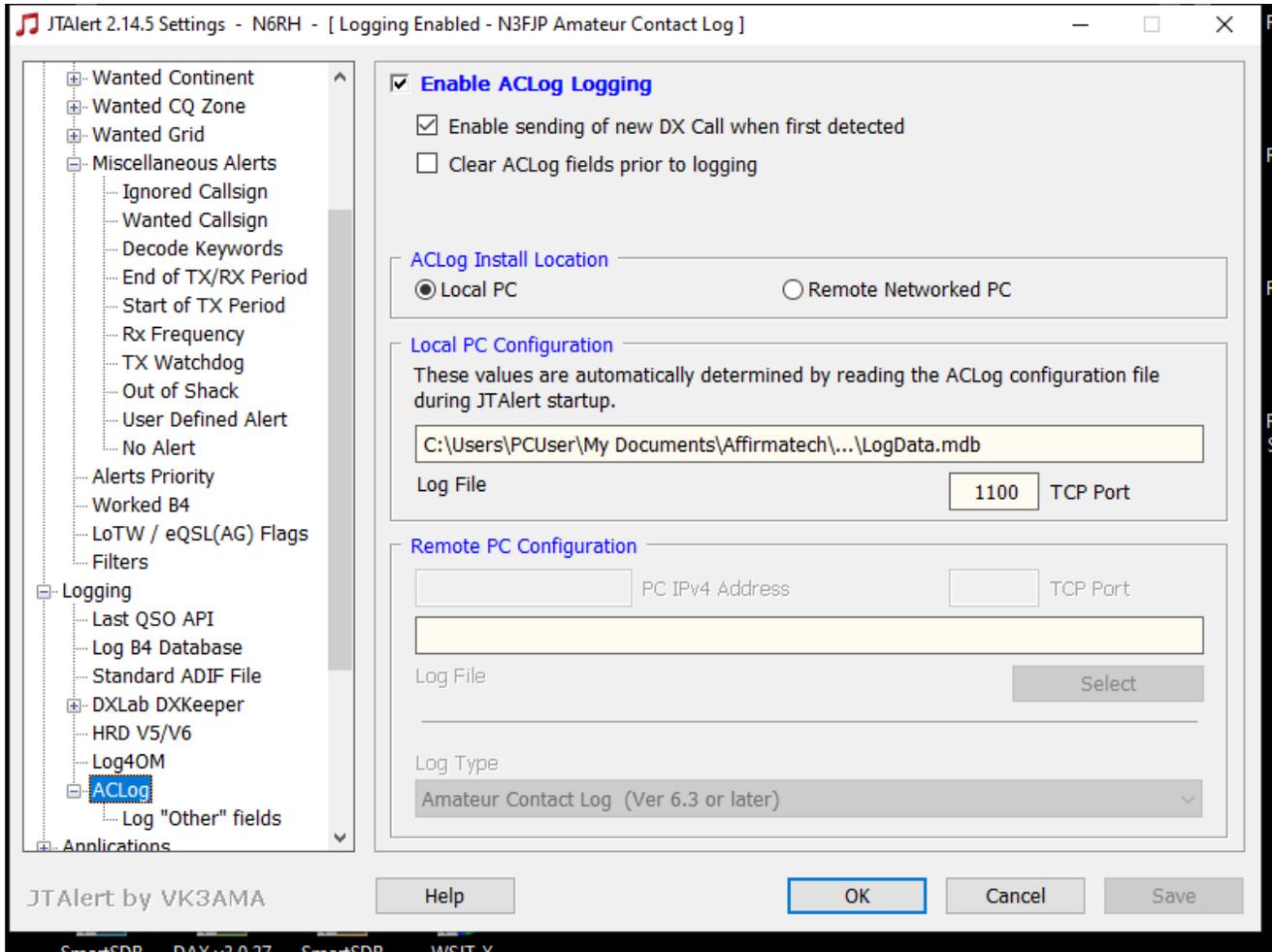


Figure 1

Now skip down and click on Web Services, and then click on Online Logbooks. Make sure QRZ.com is checked with the API Key set to 1100.

On the left of the main screen (Figure 1) click on Online XML Callbooks and make sure QRZ.com Online XML Service is checked as shown on Figure 2 below. Then fill in your sign-on name (usually your callsign) and your password that you use when you sign on to QRZ.com.

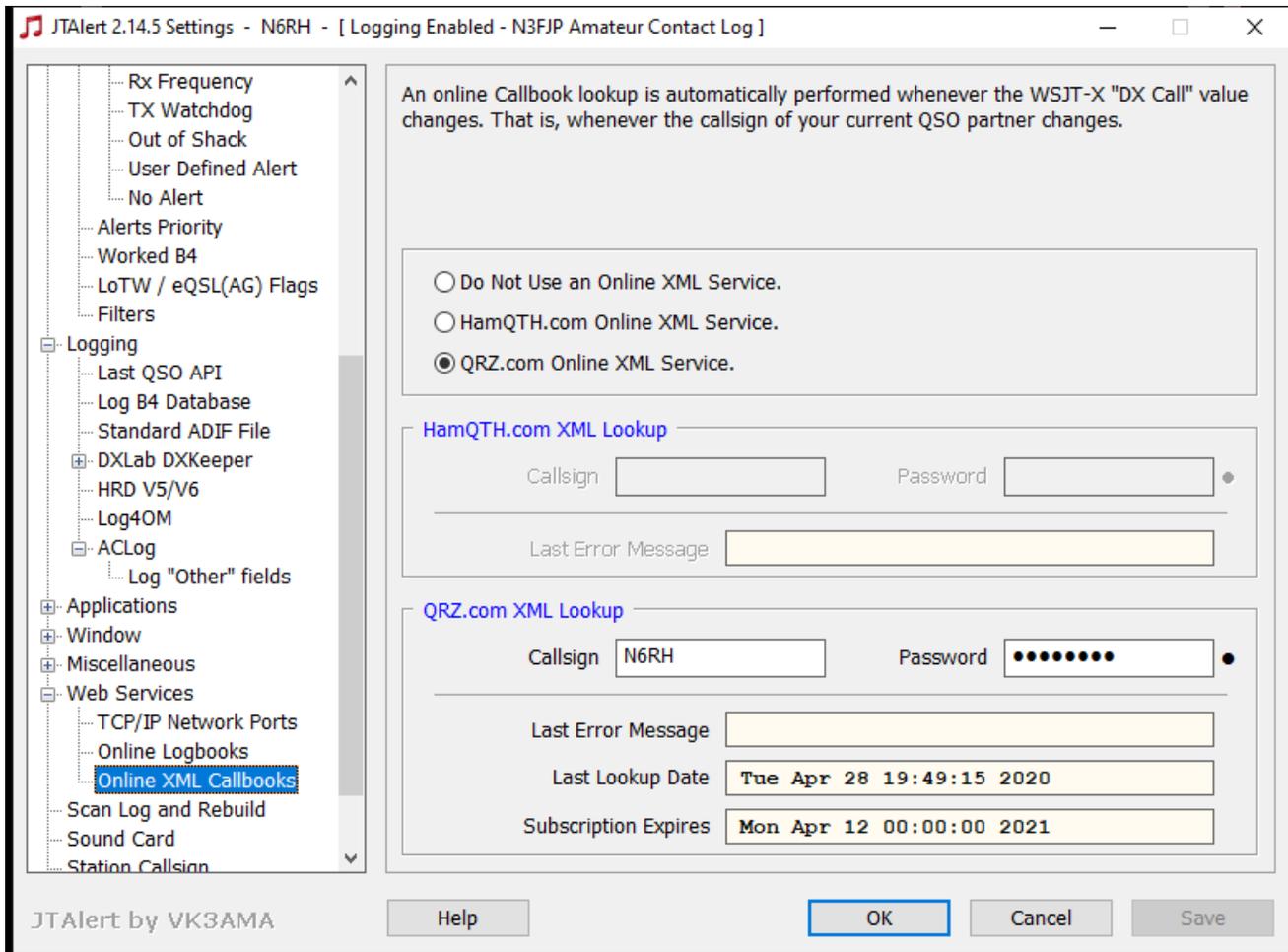


Figure 2

So far as I am aware, these are the only settings I use to auto log into N3FJP ALog. To make a contact I simply double click on a contact in the JTAAlert area and from there everything is automatic. The only pause is when JTAAlert asks me if I want to log the contact. I choose to do it this way to make sure I have started ALog.

Explore the many options of JTAAlert. There's whole bunch of neat stuff you can do with the program if you choose to.