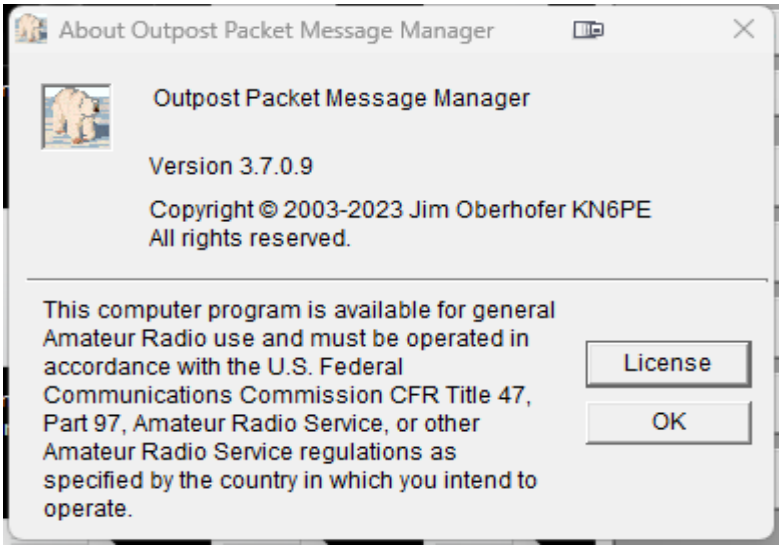


First, to download the latest version of the Outpost Packet program, go to https://outpostpm.org – the program files, as well as links to documentation, are on that page. Note that Google Chrome will NOT permit downloads from this site. To get the programs, please use Microsoft Edge, Firefox, or another browser instead. This setup was used with the version noted above

Outpost was designed for the Amateur Radio ARES/RACES packet user community. The thinking behind it was to create an intuitive, easy-to-use program that lets ARES/RACES organizations focus on the "message," not the "medium," as they pass digital message traffic to and from an operational area BBS. Further details are on the site. The program runs on Windows based systems (I'm using it under Windows 11, 64-bit).

ICS forms (209 and 313) can be used with the program.

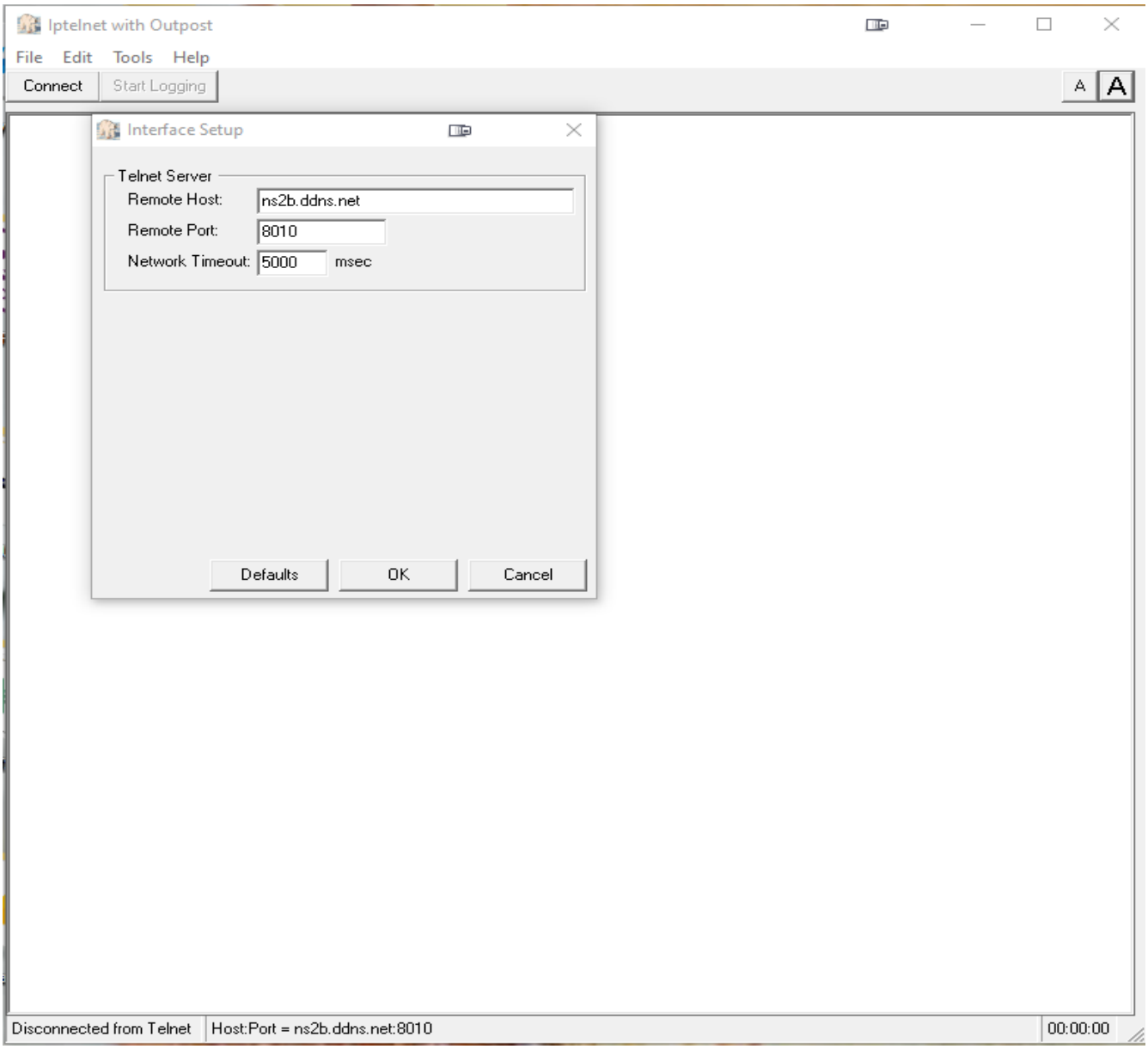
This PDF file will cover connecting to the NS2B BBS, for the PCL Net, and as a packet setup. The BBS itself is located in Penfield, New York, and features RF and telnet based access. Since I operate "internet radio" only, I'll cover "telnet" operations to the BBS. For details on connecting to the PCL Net, and its operation, download the file noted "The PCL Net", located at:

https://www.wx4qz.net/elk.htm (look for the appropriate link).

This is also in the D-Rats file area for amateur radio station N5VLZ.

First, download and install the Outpost program. The 2 main programs that will be used with telnet operations are iptelnet, and the Outpost Packet client.

The first graphic below is the settings you'll need to program into the iptelnet program for the NS2B BBS.



That is the main setup to connect to the NS2B BBS, via the iptelnet program. You don't need to open the port in your computer router. Enter the data as shown in the screenshot above. This is what you'll use to connect to the NS2B BBS...although other options are available in the file "The PCL Net.PDF"

As a side note, the graphic to the left of the underscore, square, and X on the upper right of the display...is with the Display Fusion program. It allows working with multiple monitors, with several items open. Freeware and commercial versions are available at https://binaryfortress.com/support

To me, it's worth the registration cost, and it's a lifetime registration fee.

**

The following items are NOT covered in this PDF, but are covered in the Outpost Documentation...you can use default values for these:

File: New messages, importing and exporting messages, deleting all messages, printing the setup, or exiting the program.

Setup: Address Book, Profiles, and PC Time Check

Tools: Report Settings, Log Settings, General Settings, Script Settings, Scripts, Packet Session Counter Reset, Resetting and Packing of Columns

Widths and Forms, and Interactive Packet

Forms: ICS 309 and ICS 213 Forms.

Actions: Send and Receive, Opening Enhanced Messages, Force a 1 time bulletin retrieval, and viewing Outpost Data directories.

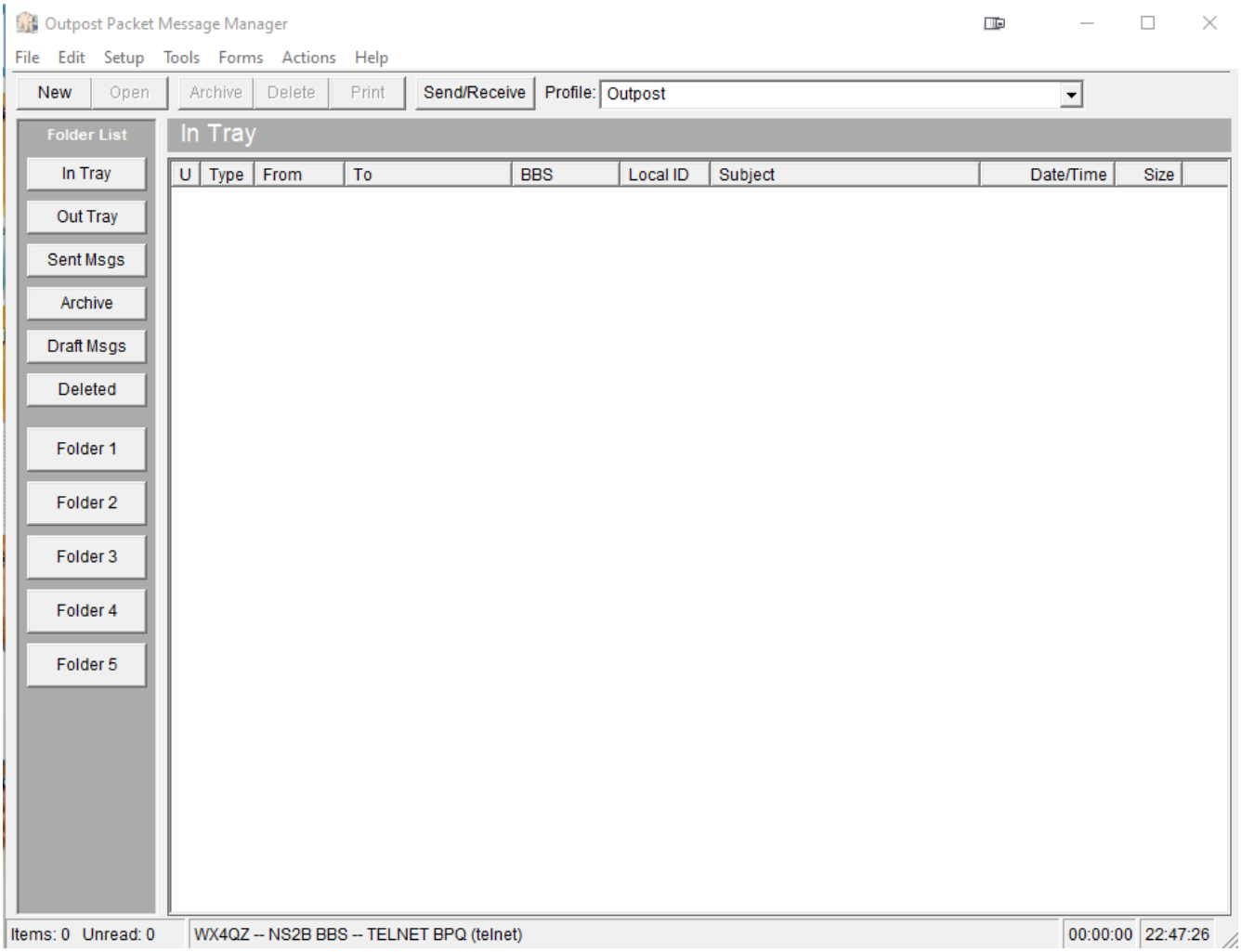
Next, load the main Outpost program. Once loaded up, this will be the first screen you will see. Again, I won't cover each item available, as that's in the main program documentation. However, I will cover the settings needed for the NS2B BBS, which are also covered in The PCL Net.PDF file.

As noted, these are all screenshots from my setup, so that's why you see my callsign (formerly WX4QZ, now N5VLZ). Once you set up your values, your callsign will show up, as the settings for the BBS...in this case, the NS2B BBS.

The numbers on the bottom right are the local time at the time of the screenshot. The 00:00:00 to the left of the time stamp is a timer, if you're doing an automated connection, which is covered in the documentation.

The NEW button allows you to compose a new message, and the Send/Receive button activates the program to send any outgoing messages, and retrieve any incoming messages by categories you have selected.

The In Tray covers messages in your In Box, and the Out Tray are messages you've created that haven't been sent yet. Sent Messages, Archive, Draft, and Deleted Messages are just as they describe. You can set up 5 different folders for various categories...this is covered in the main program documentation.

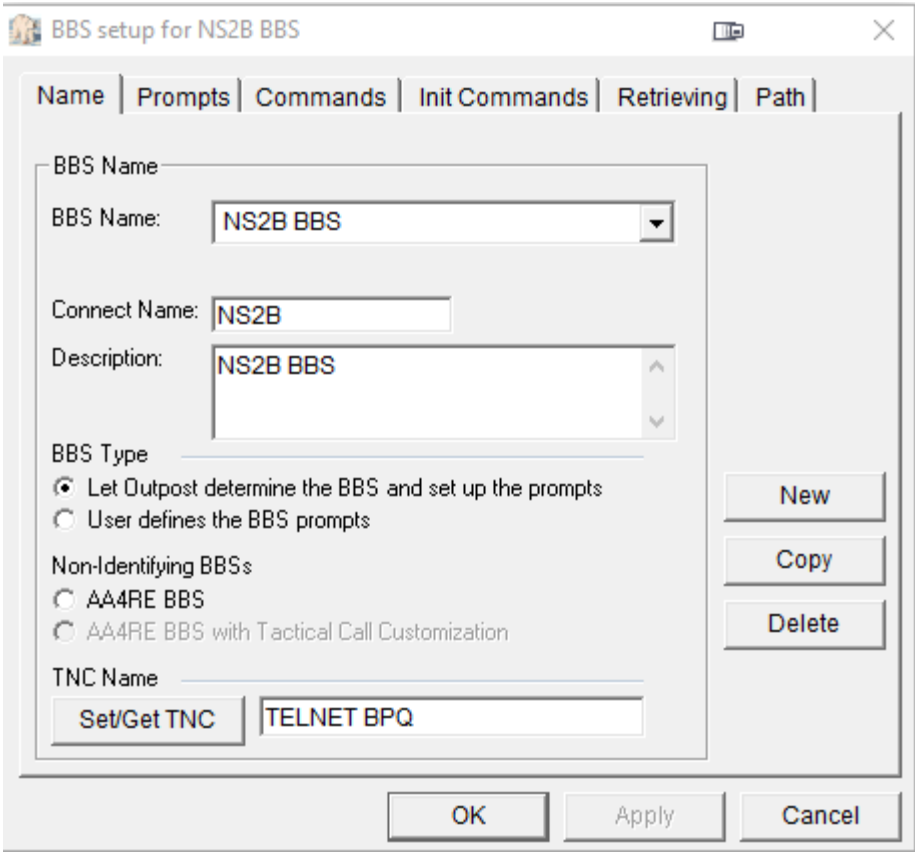


The first one to configure is Setup → BBS.

There are several options you have to do...the first one is on the next page.

First, under Name, choose NEW. Under the fields noted (BBS Name, Connect Name, and Description), enter the data as shown above. This step (NEW) should be used in all cases to create entries. The Set/Get TNC will be covered under Settings → Device Setup...which is later in this file.

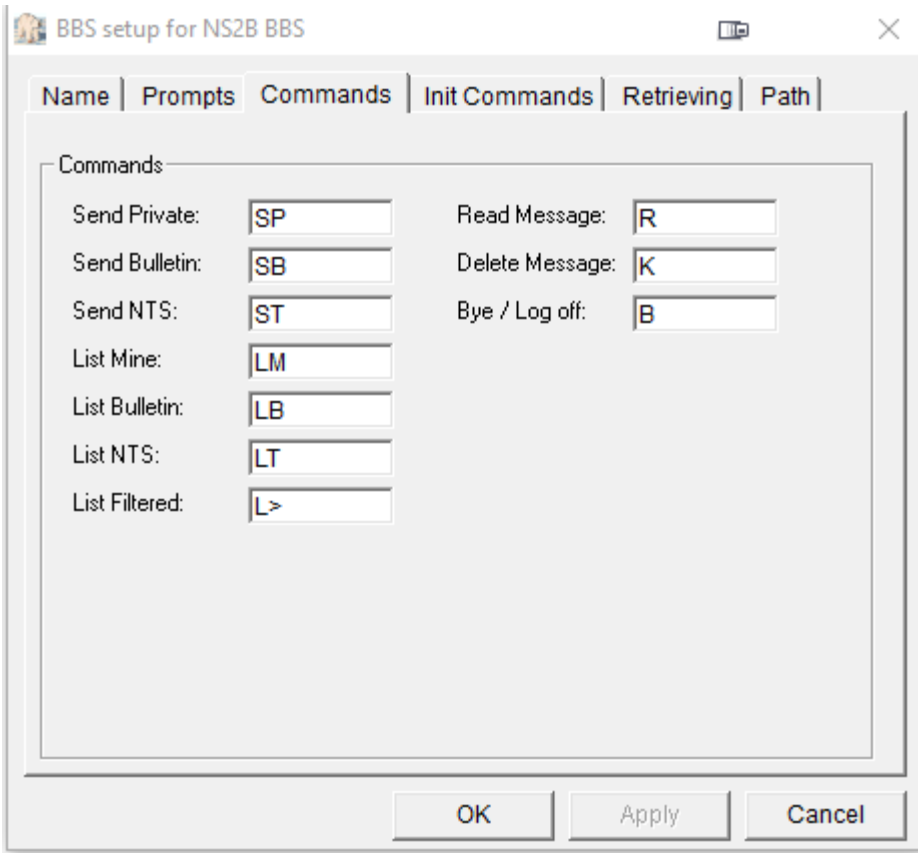
As noted earlier, this is with Packet Via Telnet...so, there is no actual rig, TNC, cables, etc., with the setup. For areas with my callsign, you obviously would enter your data. Get with NS2B for your callsign and password info.

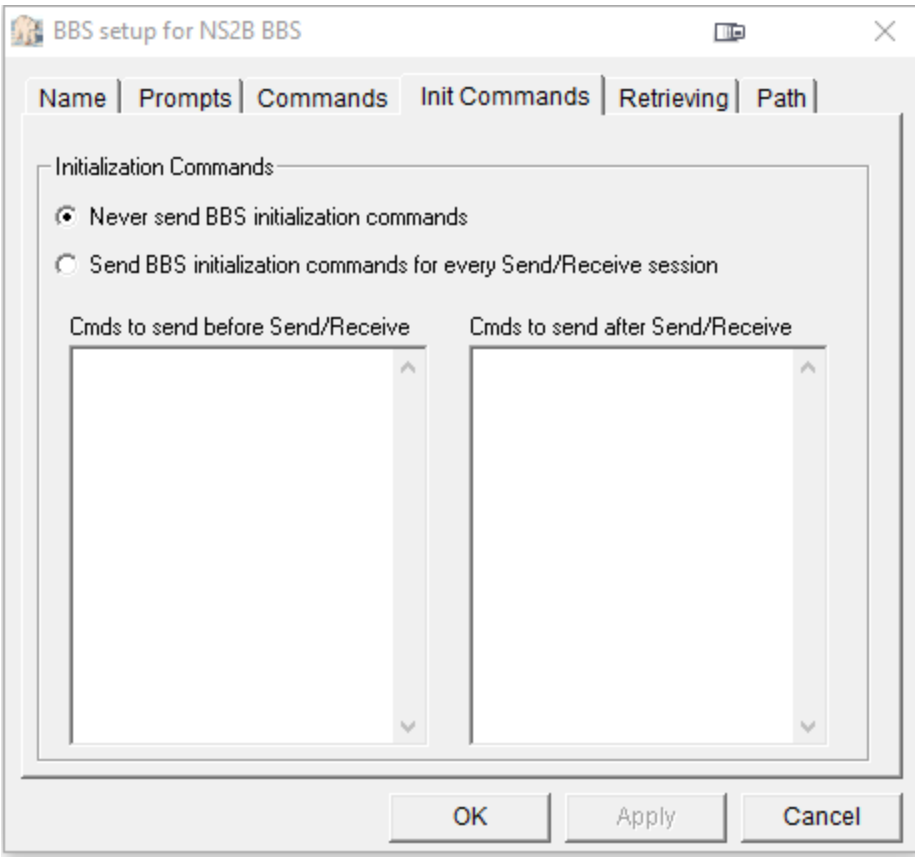


This is especially helpful if you don't have a packet node or network within your area...or if you don't have a rig or TNC in your shack. This can be the case for folks who live with antenna restrictions or prohibitions, Home Owners Association (HOA) agreements, or CC&R's (Covenants, Creeds, and Restrictions). This is also helpful when HF conditions are deplorable.

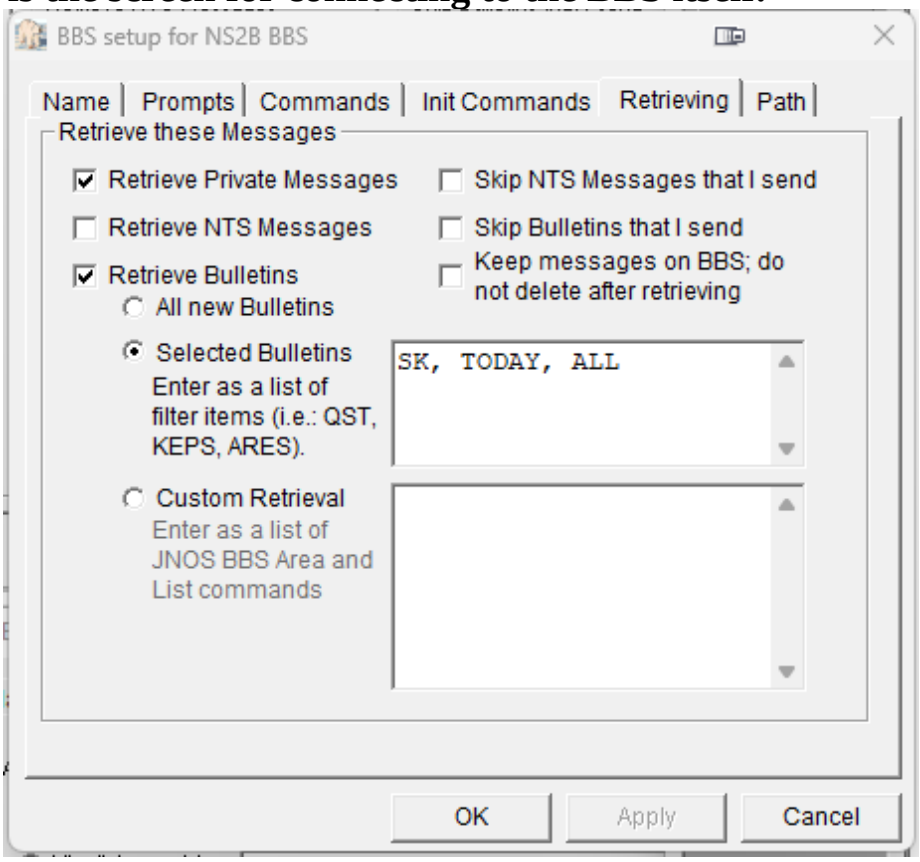
I will note that you need a high speed internet connection...either DSL or broadband, as dial-up internet is far too slow. If you have a Verizon Mi-Fi device or a hotspot (cellphone or otherwise), you can use that...but I'd suggest having "unlimited", so you don't have to "worry about the meter running". Don't worry about "Prompts". Under Commands, and Init Commands.

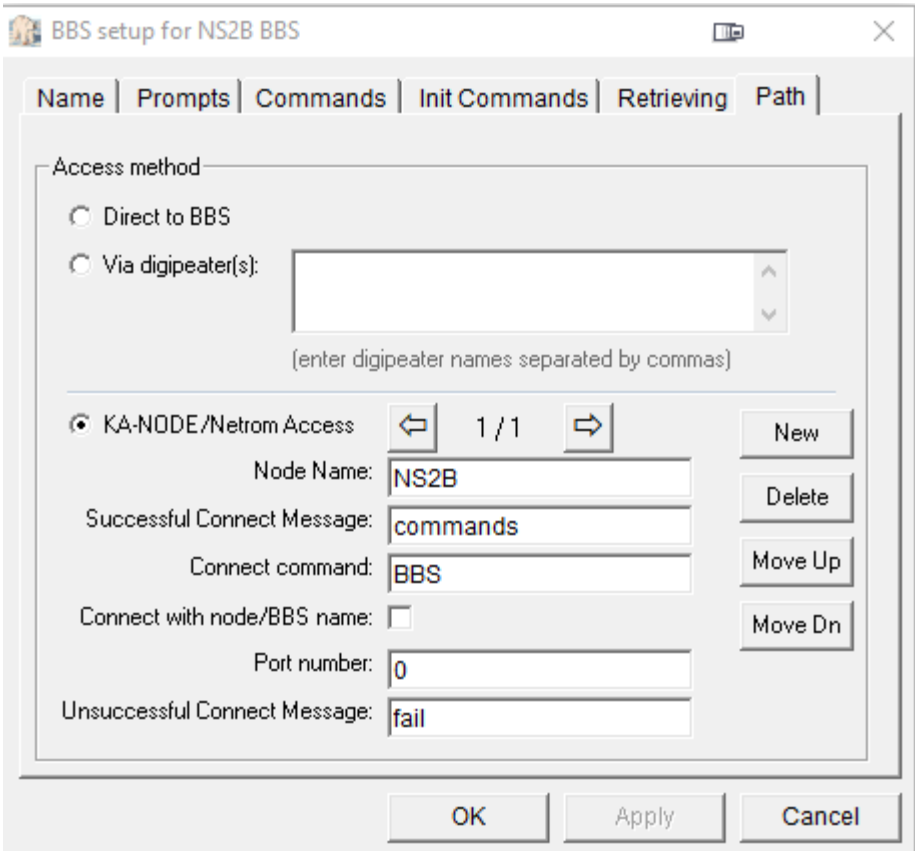
These are noted on the next page.

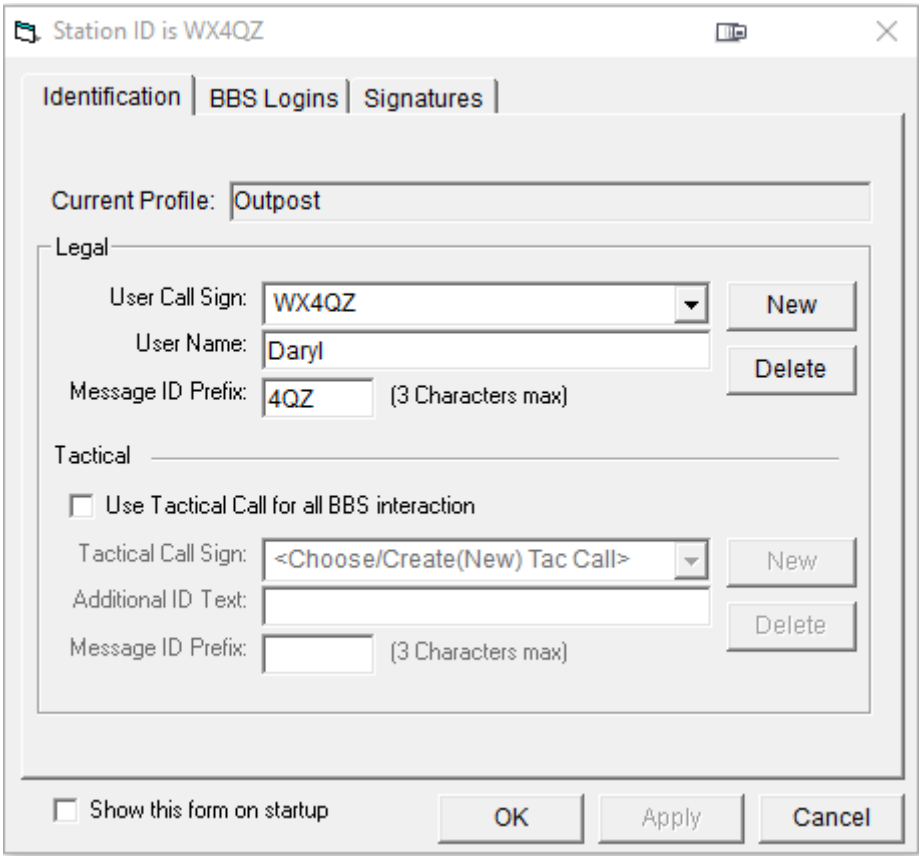

BBS setup for NS2B BBS
Name
Prompts
Commands
Init Commands
Retrieving
Path
Commands
Send Private:
SP
Send Bulletin:
SB
Send NTS:
ST
List Mine:
LM
List Bulletin:
LB
List NTS:
LT
List Filtered:
L>
Read Message:
R
Delete Message:
K
Bye / Log off:
B
OK
Apply
Cancel

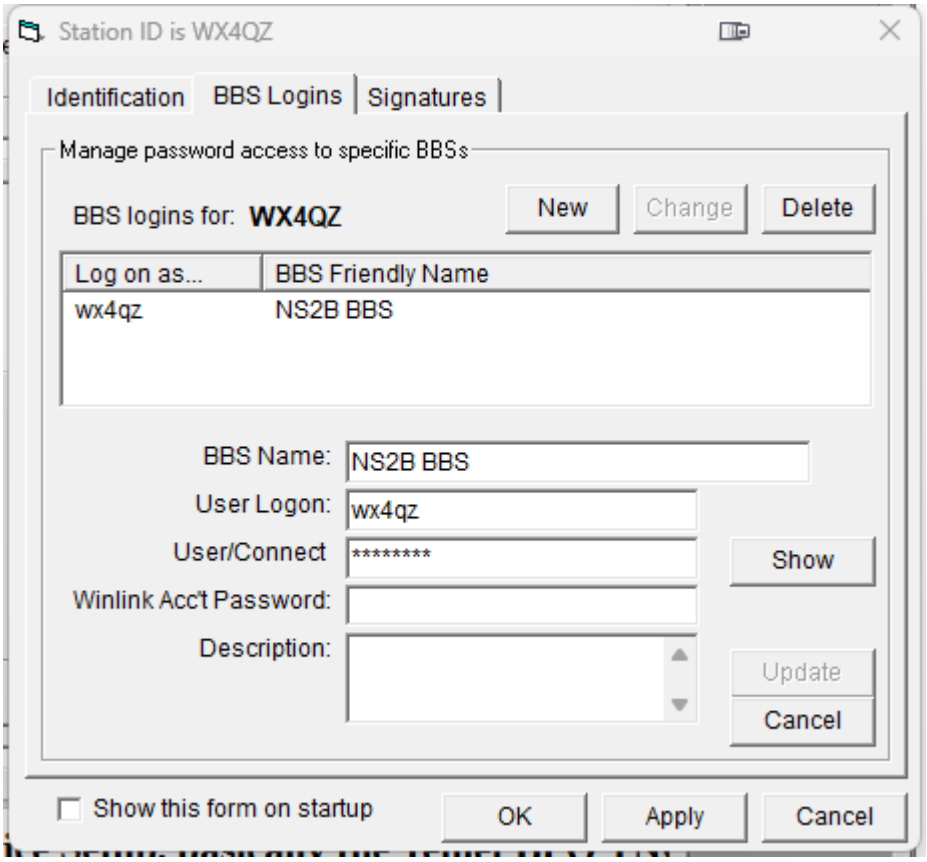

BBS setup for NS2B BBS
Name
Prompts
Commands
Init Commands
Retrieving
Path
Initialization Commands
Never send BBS initialization commands
Send BBS initialization commands for every Send/Receive session
Cmds to send before Send/Receive
Cmds to send after Send/Receive
OK
Apply
Cancel

Under Retrieving: Check with NS2B for a list of all bulletin categories. Then, under Path, is the screen for connecting to the BBS itself:

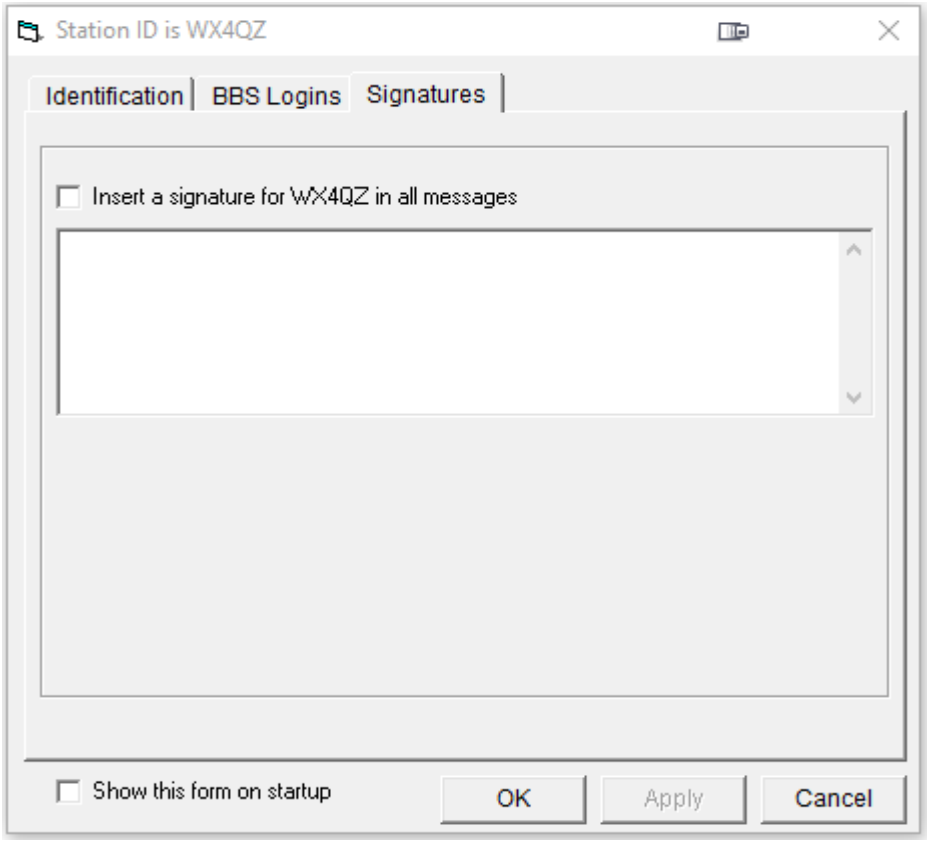




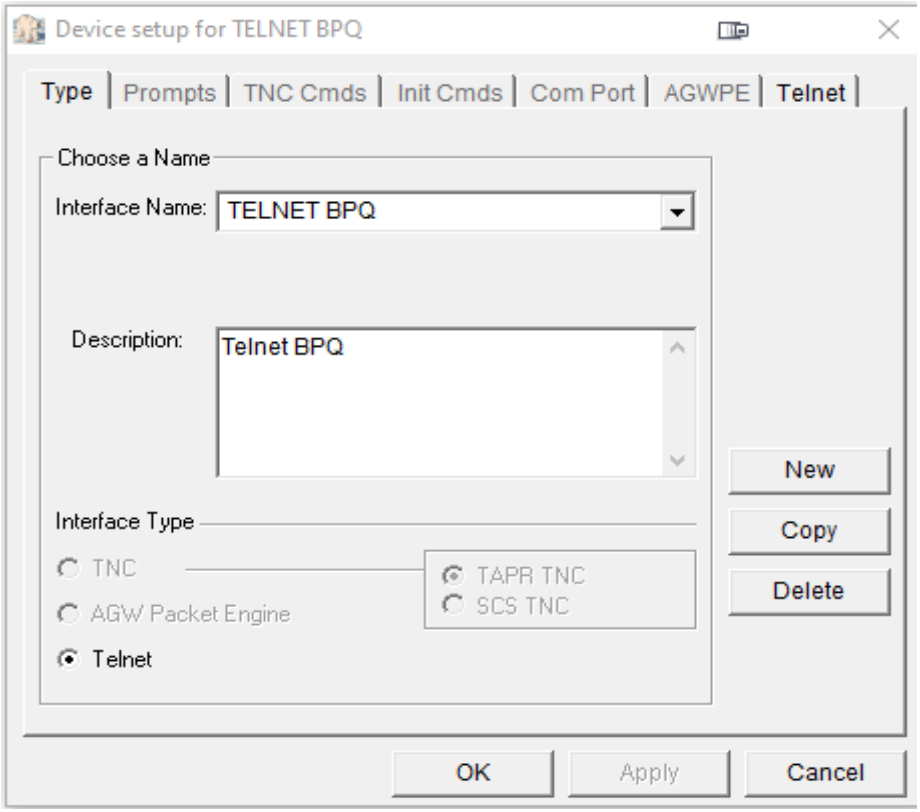

Station ID is WX4QZ
Identification
BBS Logins
Signatures
Current Profile:
Outpost
Legal
User Call Sign:
WX4QZ
New
User Name:
Daryl
Delete
Message ID Prefix:
4QZ
(3 Characters max)
Tactical
Use Tactical Call for all BBS interaction
Tactical Call Sign:
<Choose/Create(New) Tac Call>
New
Additional ID Text:
Delete
Message ID Prefix:
(3 Characters max)
Show this form on startup
OK
Apply
Cancel

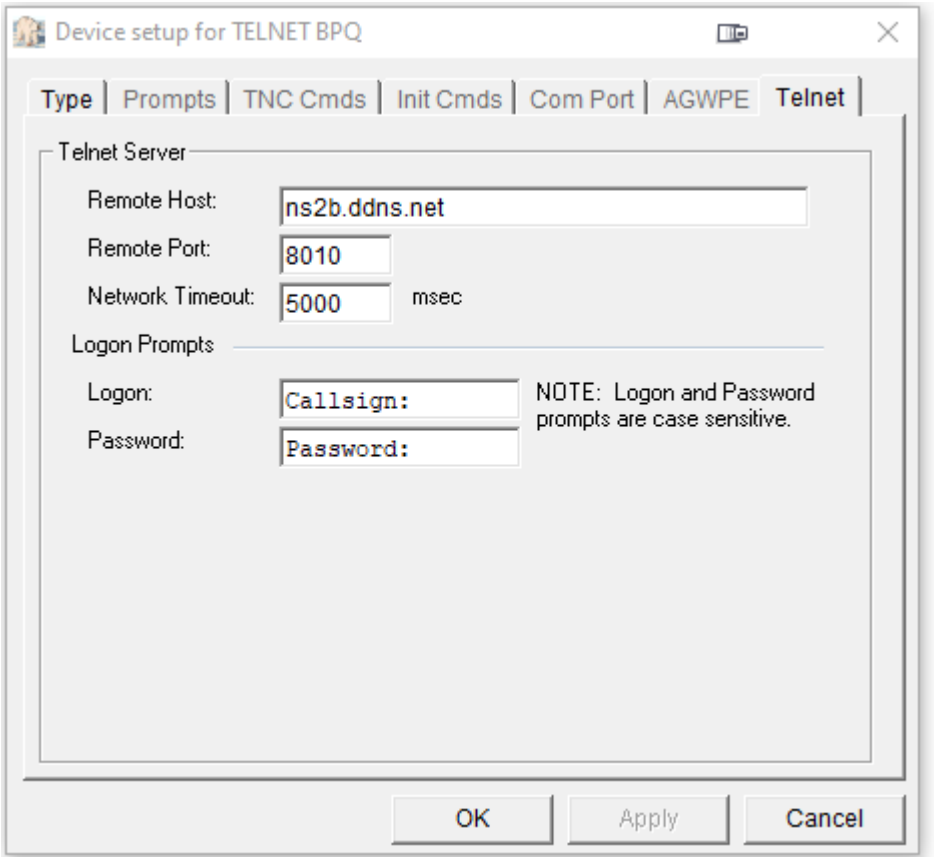

Station ID is WX4QZ
Identification
BBS Logins
Signatures
Manage password access to specific BBSs
BBS logins for: WX4QZ
New
Change
Delete
Log on as...
BBS Friendly Name
wx4qz
NS2B BBS
BBS Name:
NS2B BBS
User Logon:
wx4qz
User/Connect
****
Show
Winlink Acc't Password:
Description:
Update
Cancel
Show this form on startup
OK
Apply
Cancel

Obviously, enter your BBS, callsign, password, and if desired, a signature.

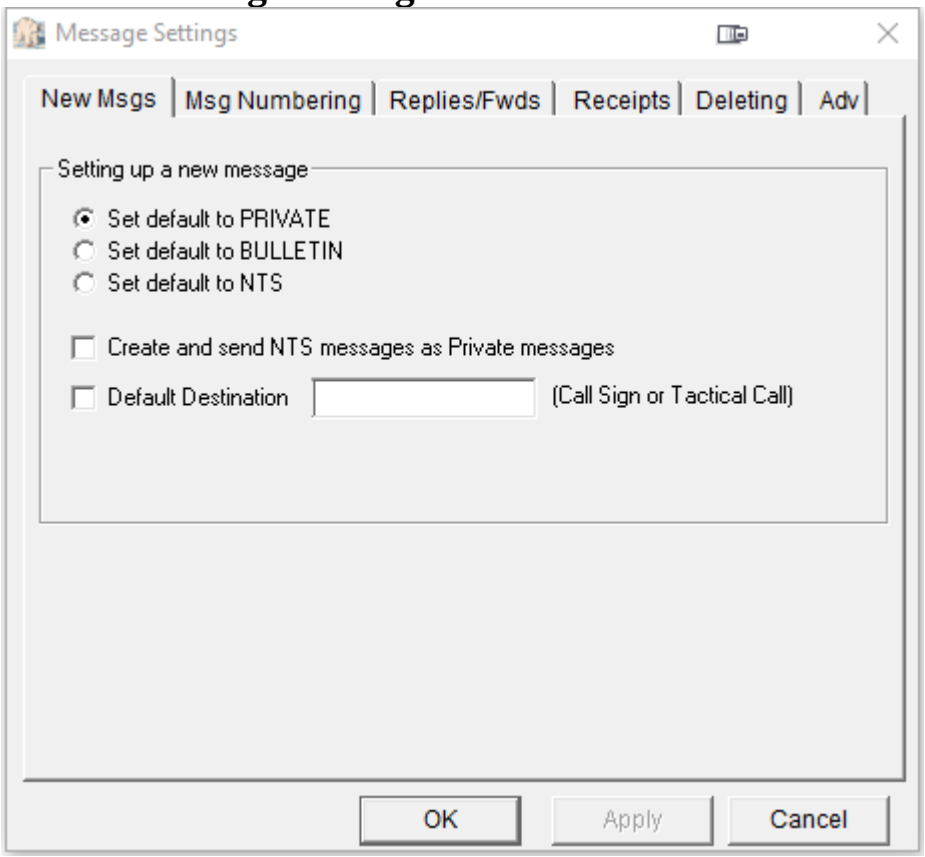


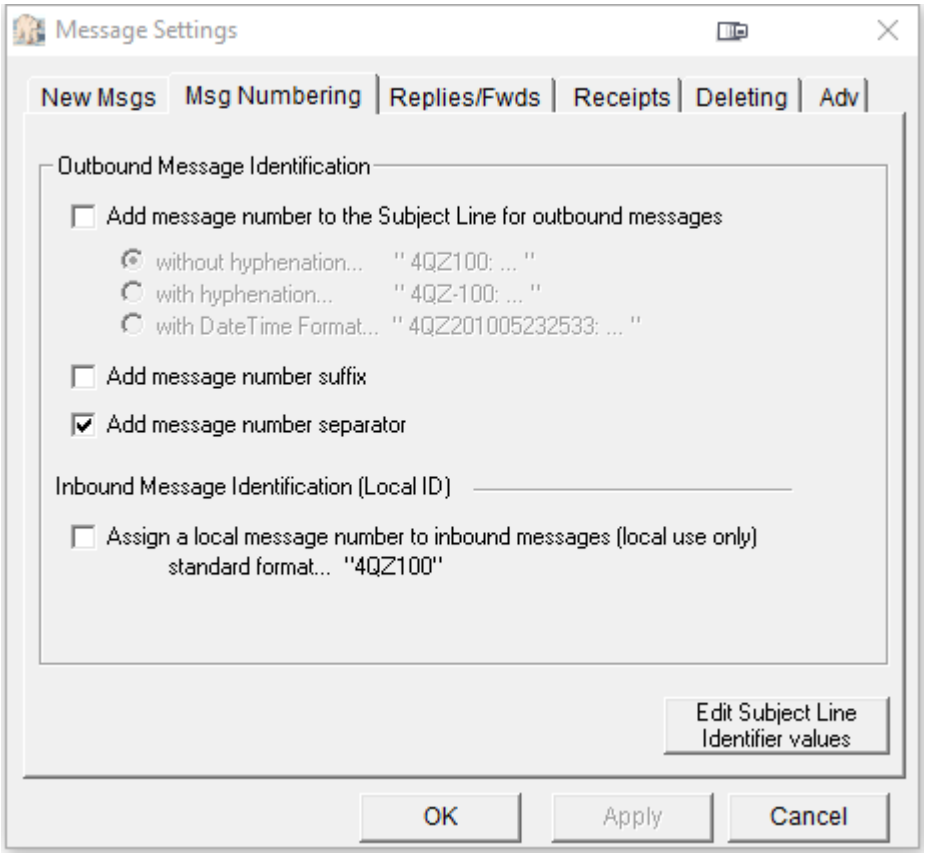
Next, is the Device Setup, basically the Telnet BPQ TNC:

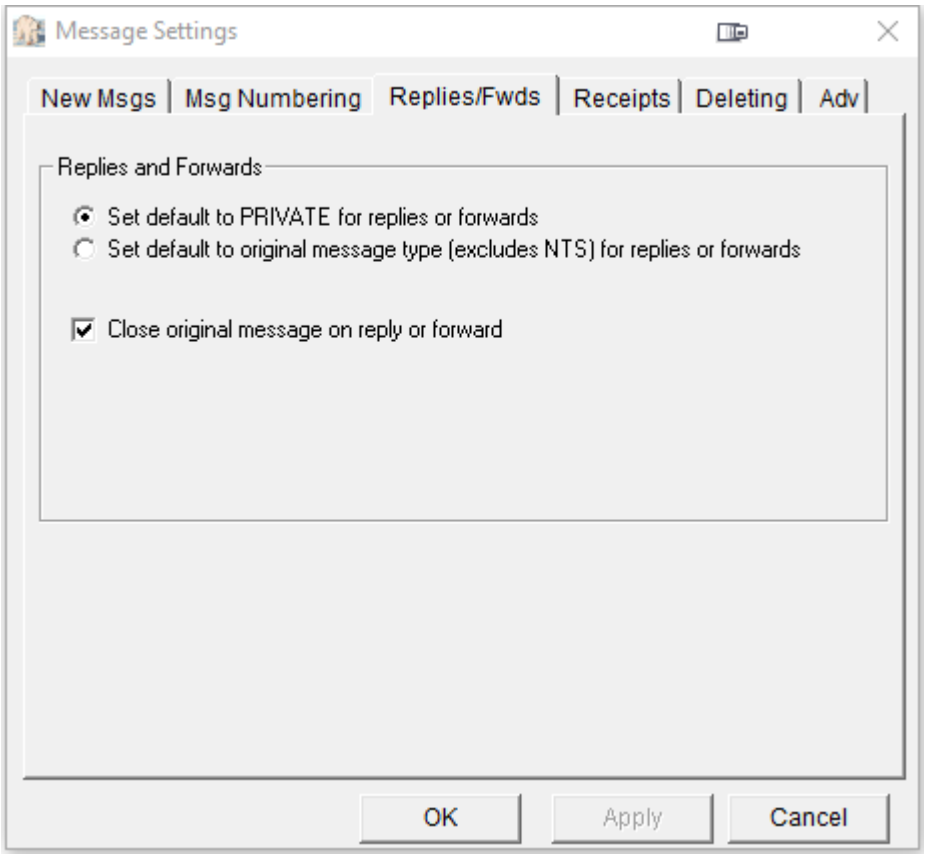


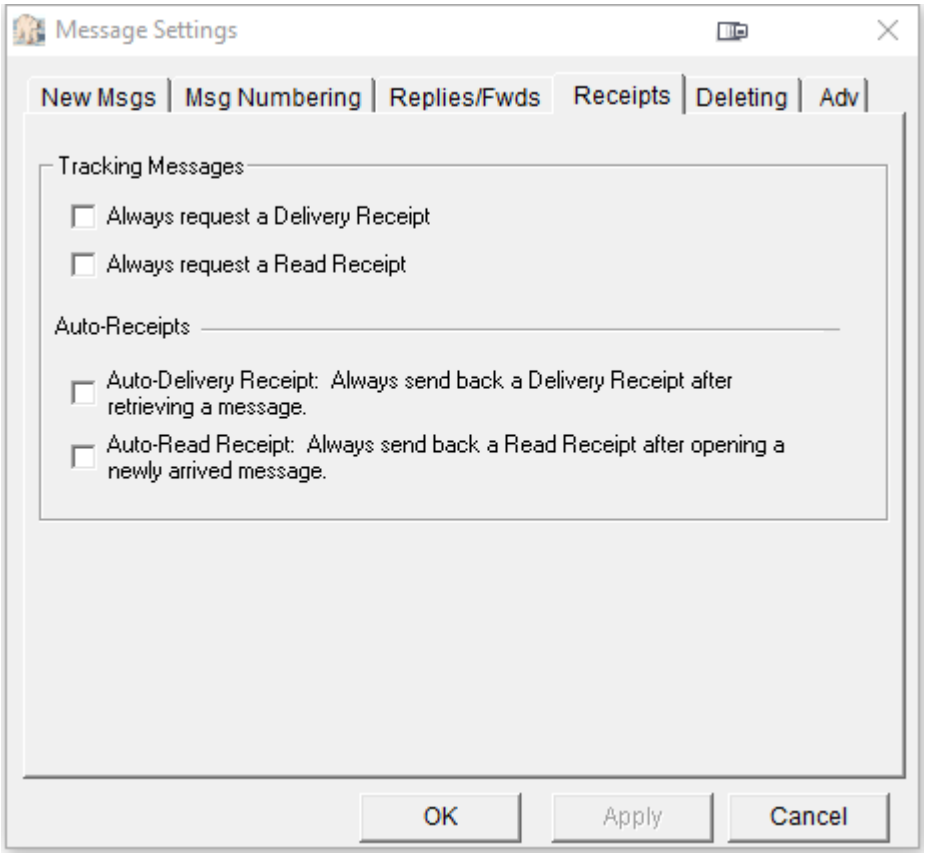


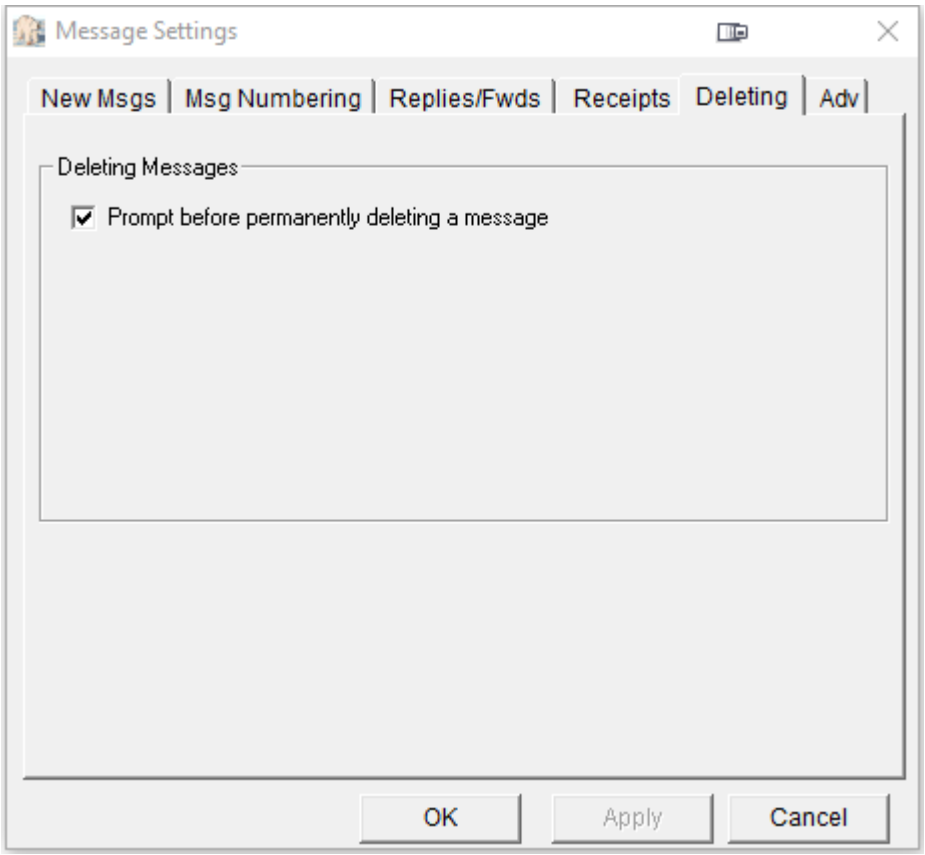
Next, the Tools And Message Settings:

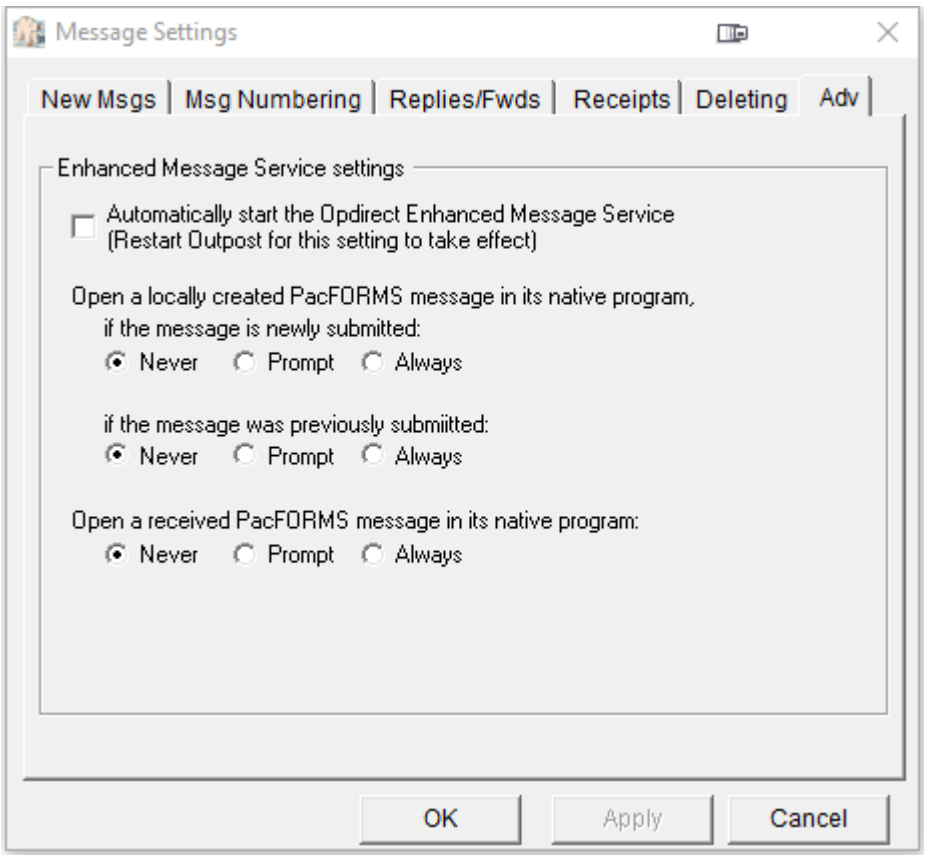



Message Settings
New Msgs
Msg Numbering
Replies/Fwds
Receipts
Deleting
Adv
Outbound Message Identification
Add message number to the Subject Line for outbound messages
without hyphenation... '' 4QZ100: ... ''
with hyphenation... '' 4QZ-100: ... ''
with DateTime Format... '' 4QZ201005232533: ... ''
Add message number suffix
Add message number separator
Inbound Message Identification (Local ID)
Assign a local message number to inbound messages (local use only)
standard format... ''4QZ100''
Edit Subject Line Identifier values
OK
Apply
Cancel

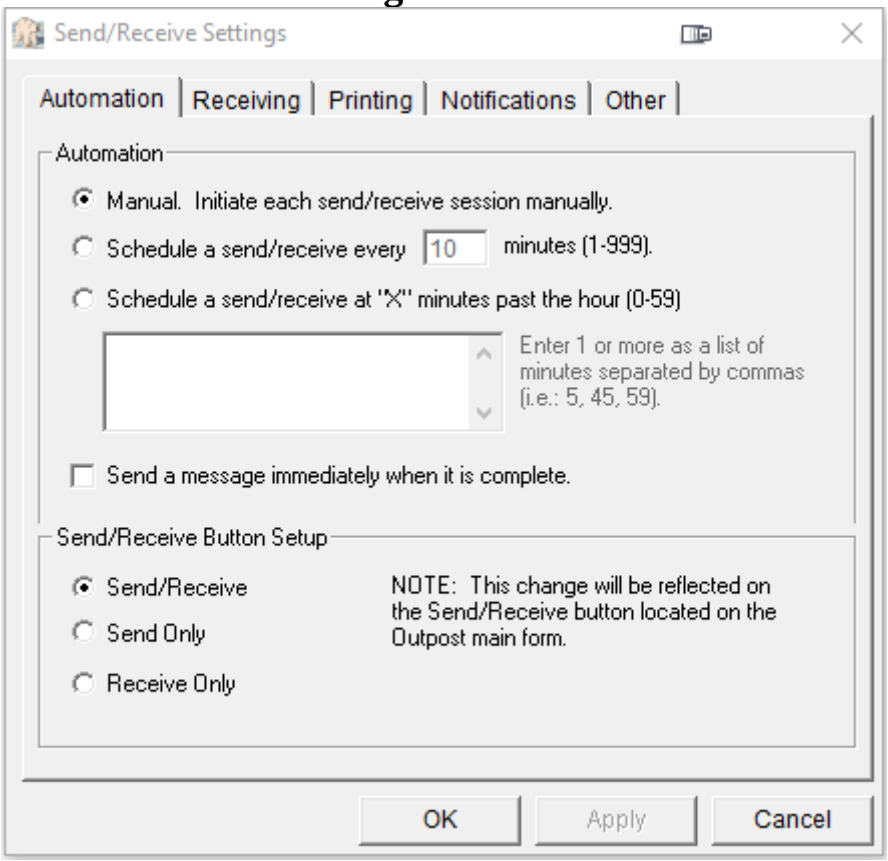

Message Settings
New Msgs
Msg Numbering
Replies/Fwds
Receipts
Deleting
Adv
Replies and Forwards
Set default to PRIVATE for replies or forwards
Set default to original message type (excludes NTS) for replies or forwards
Close original message on reply or forward
OK
Apply
Cancel

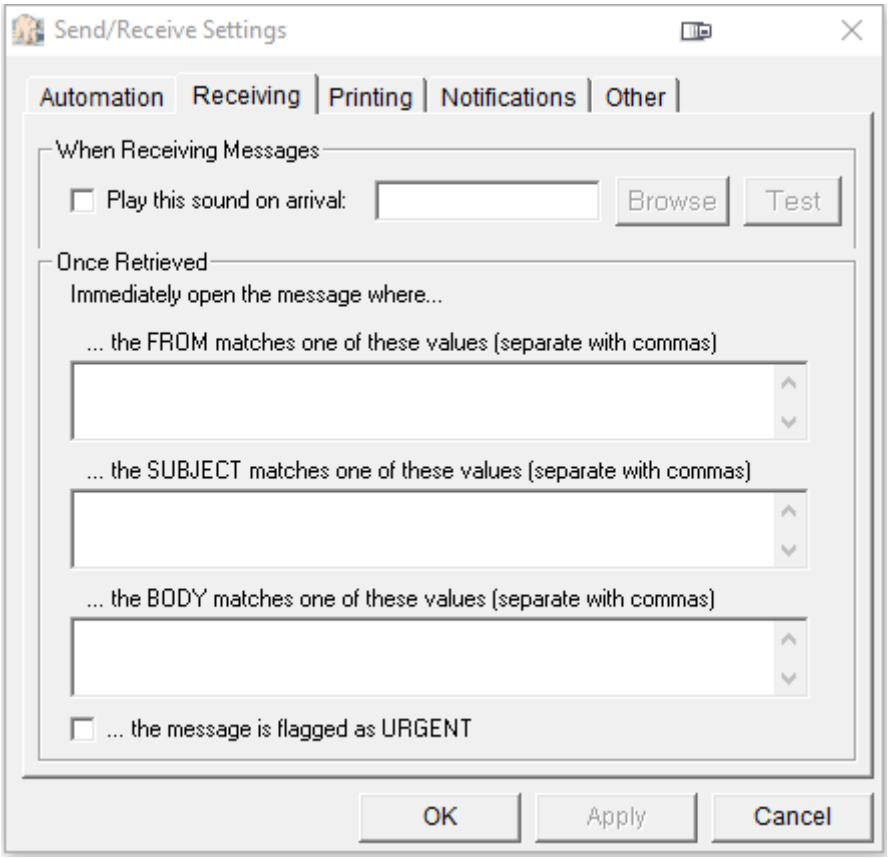

Message Settings
New Msgs
Msg Numbering
Replies/Fwds
Receipts
Deleting
Adv
Tracking Messages
Always request a Delivery Receipt
Always request a Read Receipt
Auto-Receipts
Auto-Delivery Receipt: Always send back a Delivery Receipt after retrieving a message.
Auto-Read Receipt: Always send back a Read Receipt after opening a newly arrived message.
OK
Apply
Cancel

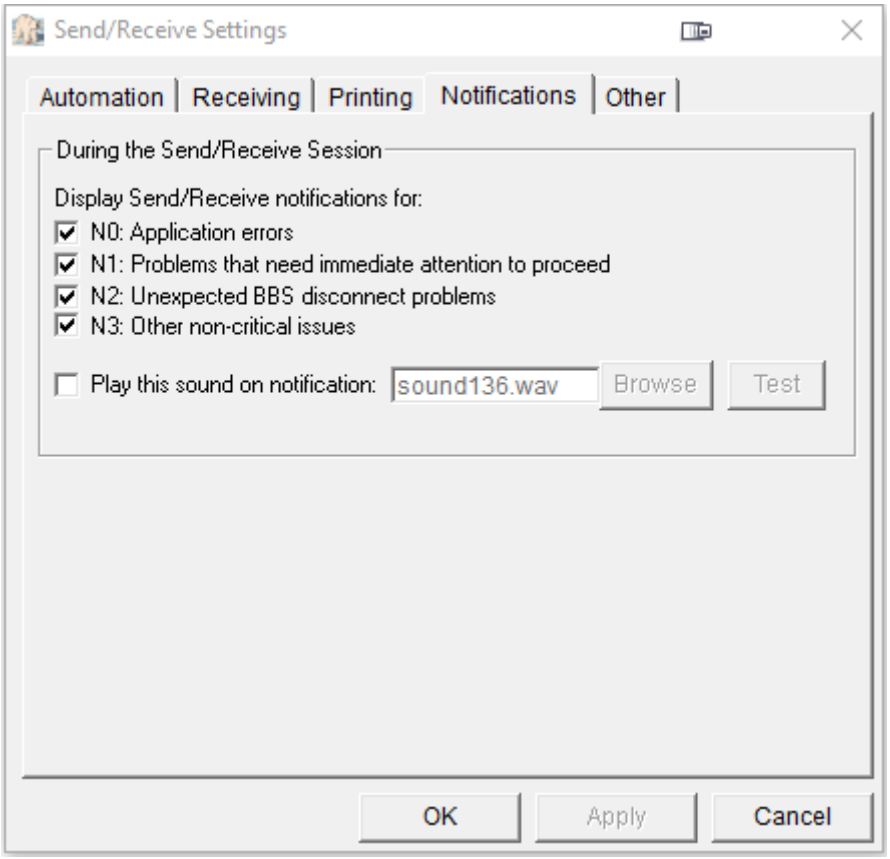

Message Settings
New Msgs
Msg Numbering
Replies/Fwds
Receipts
Deleting
Adv
Deleting Messages
Prompt before permanently deleting a message
OK
Apply
Cancel

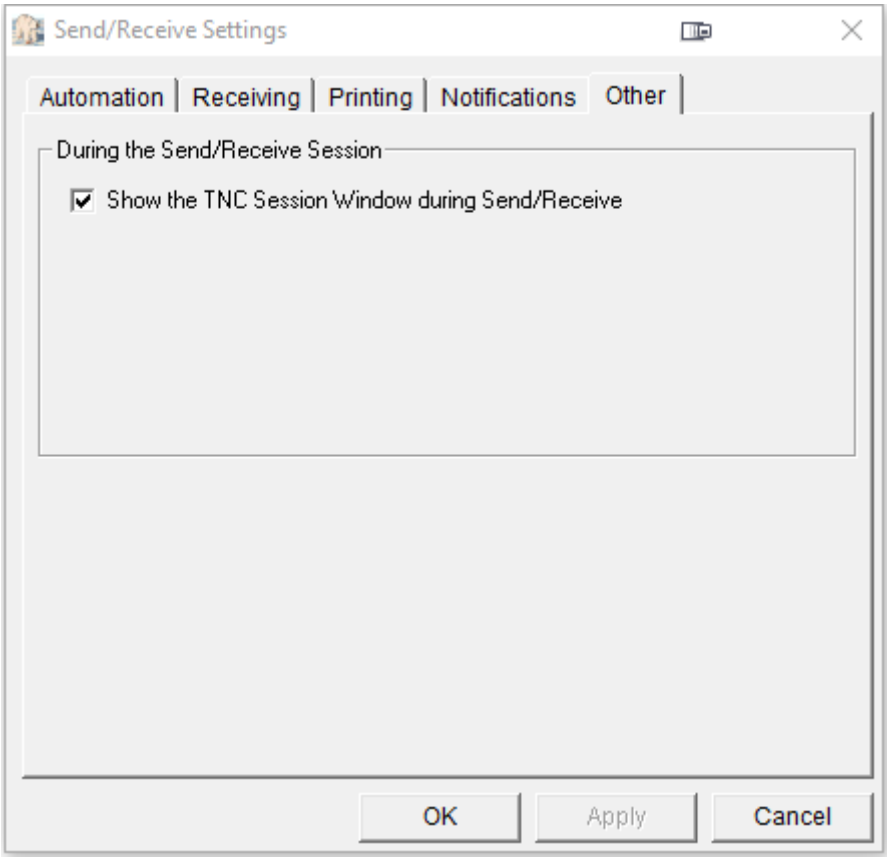


Lastly, the Send And Receive Settings:




Send/Receive Settings
Automation
Receiving
Printing
Notifications
Other
When Receiving Messages
Play this sound on arrival:
Browse
Test
Once Retrieved
Immediately open the message where...
... the FROM matches one of these values (separate with commas)
... the SUBJECT matches one of these values (separate with commas)
... the BODY matches one of these values (separate with commas)
... the message is flagged as URGENT
OK
Apply
Cancel


Send/Receive Settings
Automation
Receiving
Printing
Notifications
Other
During the Send/Receive Session
Display Send/Receive notifications for:
N0: Application errors
N1: Problems that need immediate attention to proceed
N2: Unexpected BBS disconnect problems
N3: Other non-critical issues
Play this sound on notification:
sound136.wav
Browse
Test
OK
Apply
Cancel



Once you have all these setup, you should be able to connect to the NS2B BBS. If you can't connect, the system may be offline. As noted, you'll need to check with NS2B, to get your account setup with your callsign, and password, and you'll use your own data instead of mine.

Once you are in the system, you can use Outpost to connect to the BBS, send any messages you composed in a previous session (new or replies), as well as download new messages, which you can read and reply to. If you have the har drive space, don't empty the Deleted Messages Folder. Otherwise, Outpost will think you never retrieved the messages, and will download them again.

Once you connect via the iptelnet client, enter your callsign and password, then type PCL to enter the net. The command /? will tell you what commands you can enter, such as setting your QTH. For more information on The PCL Net itself, download the file The PCL Net.PDF – and lastly, for a funny look at one of the original nets (when it was on the N0KFQ BBS), download The E.D. Net.PDF – all this is typed at the keyboard.

You can obtain these from http://www.wx4qz.net/elk.htm
Daryl Stout, N5VLZ, Net Control/Scribe, The PCL Net