

Let's Meet Corneliu Făurescu, YO4AUL

Article written by Nini Vasilescu, YO3CCC, and originally published on Radioamator.ro on January 5, 2011.

- Holder of the **Master of Sport** title.
- A passionate VHF/UHF enthusiast, DXer, and homebrew radio equipment builder.
- Winner of numerous top rankings in national and international amateur radio contests.
- Author of technical articles published in amateur radio magazines.

YO3CCC: When and where were you born?

YO4AUL: I was born on May 14, 1949, in the town of Brad, an important gold-mining center in Hunedoara County, in the historic Țara Moșilor region of Romania.

YO3CCC: How did you first become interested in radio?

YO4AUL: My introduction to radio began at home, in Brad, thanks to my father, who was passionate about radio technology. He enjoyed building and restoring vacuum-tube radio receivers. He had a very well-equipped workshop, complete with measuring instruments he had built himself. The only item I have kept as a reminder of those days is a rather sophisticated cathetometer that he constructed. As a result, our home was filled with radio receivers of all kinds and brands. As a child, I was fascinated by the large, illuminated tuning dials and the magic-eye tuning indicators of those receivers. Back then, radio sets were impressive pieces of equipment, and their sound quality was remarkable, thanks to the large wooden cabinets that provided excellent acoustic resonance.

YO3CCC: How did you first learn about amateur radio?

YO4AUL: In my father's library, I discovered several books on electronics and radio, vacuum-tube catalogs, radio receiver schematics, and a collection of *Radioamatorul* magazines from 1957–1958. It was through the pages of that magazine that I first learned about amateur radio and operators such as George Craiu, YO3RF, Liviu Macoveanu, YO3RD, Dem Dascălu, YO8DD, YO3LX, YO9WL, YO7DZ, and others. Around that time, I also came across the book *Sfaturi pentru radioamatori (Advice for Radio Amateurs)*, published in 1960 by D. Codăuș and O. Olaru. I still have that book today as a treasured memento.

YO3CCC: Who were the first radio amateurs you met in person?

YO4AUL: I first met radio amateurs in person in 1964, after moving with my family to Constanța. Since I didn't know where to go or whom to contact to become a radio amateur, I wrote a letter to Dem Dascălu, YO8DD, whom I had read about in *Radioamatorul* magazine. He was kind enough to reply with a letter of about four pages, providing all the guidance I needed. That's how I found my way to the Constanța County Radio Club in 1964. There, among others, I met Costică Borteanu, YO4WG, who became my friend and something of a mentor in amateur radio. I also met Gheorghe (Gogu) Dragomir, YO4WE, Ștefan Romanu, YO4WV, Dr. Pop, YO4YT, Platon Axente, YO4WR, Radu Bratu, YO4HW, Mircea Rucăreanu, YO4SI, George Beacă, Sandu Marinescu, YO4ASM, George Jelescu, YO4AIP, George Moldoveanu, YO4ASV, Cornel Emil, YO4ASG, Olimpiu Dimitriu, YO4WO, YO4AB, Gelu, YO4AUP, Nicu, YO4APE, and many others.

YO3CCC: Do you operate CW, or do you work exclusively on phone?

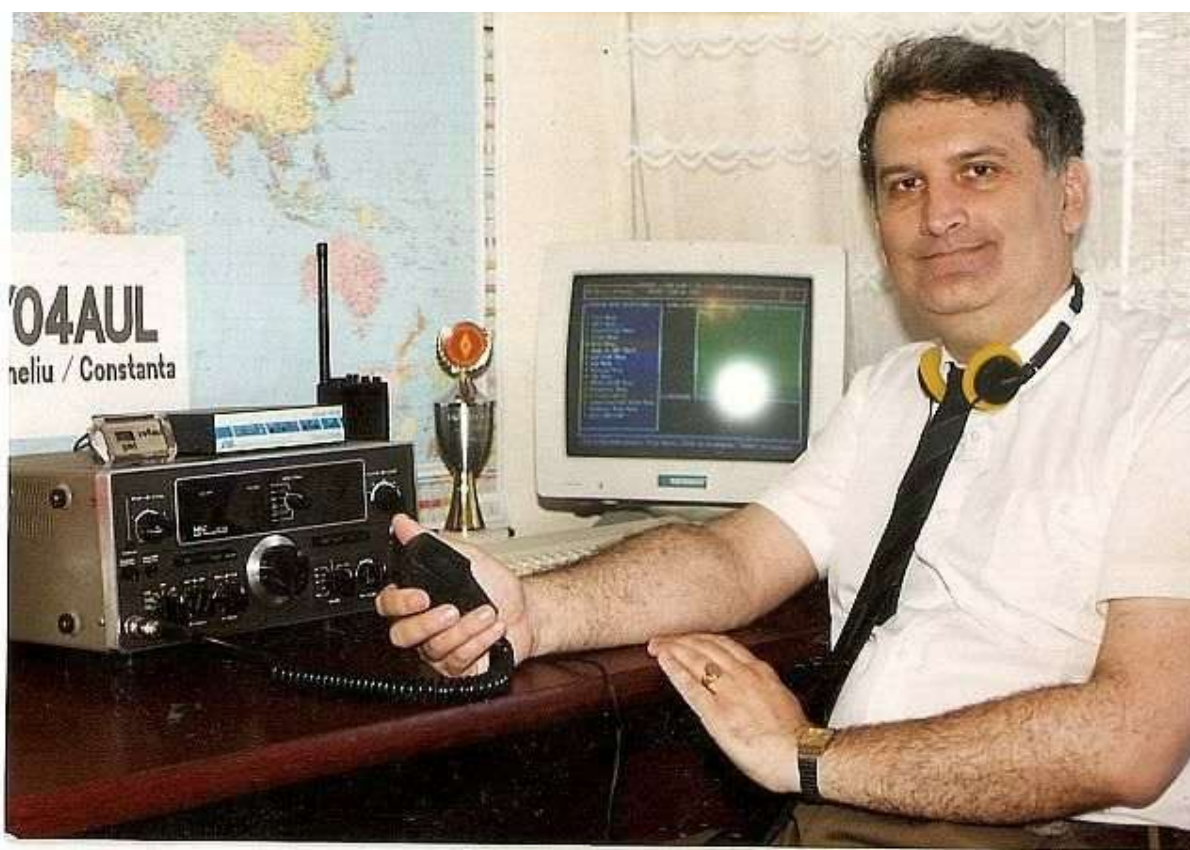
YO4AUL: Yes, I know Morse code, and without it I would hardly have achieved much on the amateur bands, considering the relatively modest equipment I was using. I know that Morse code is no longer a mandatory subject in amateur radio licensing examinations, but I believe that without knowing CW, it is difficult to achieve truly outstanding results. Besides, there's something mysterious about Morse code — it's a language that not everyone can understand. I learned CW around 1965 at the Constanța County Radio Club, under the guidance of the late Constantin Borteanu, YO4WG, a former professional radiotelegraph operator. My official amateur radio activity began on April 24, 1966, when I passed the examination and obtained Amateur Radio Transmitting Operator Certificate No. 66/24.04.1966. Initially, while awaiting my transmitting licence, I operated as a Short Wave Listener (SWL), using the SWL callsign **YO4-2555**, under Receiving Licence No. 55, issued on November 28, 1966. Between 1966 and 1969, I was a very active SWL, logging more than **3,000 callsigns heard** on the amateur bands. I believe that spending time as an SWL is an extremely valuable part of becoming a radio amateur, although it seems that this practice is no longer very common nowadays.

YO3CCC: I know you were a university student in Bucharest. Did you also get in touch with the amateur radio community there during your studies?

YO4AUL: Between 1967 and 1971, while studying at the Faculty of Foreign Trade in Bucharest, I visited the Central Radio Club every Tuesday. There, I had the pleasure of personally meeting George Craiu, YO3RF, Liviu Macoveanu, YO3RD, Vasile Ilias, YO3CR, Adrian Sinitaru, YO3APJ, and other radio amateurs whom I had previously read about in *Radioamatorul* magazine. During that period, I also volunteered at the Central Radio Club's **QSL Bureau**, helping sort and dispatch QSL cards. As part of my university practical training, I was assigned to the foreign trade enterprise *Electronum*, coincidentally in the very office where Raul Vasilescu, YO3LX, worked. We developed a very close friendship. I also maintained close relationships with Nicolae Codirnai and Costel Constantinescu, YO3ACX. On January 14, 1969, I received my Class III amateur radio transmitting and receiving licence, No. 1489, together with the callsign **YO4AUL**. I have kept that callsign to this day, despite the more recent trend of switching to shorter, two-letter suffix callsigns. In 1971, I passed the advanced amateur radio examination, obtaining Certificate No. 170, dated April 28, 1971. In 1972, I was granted a Class II amateur radio licence (No. 1882, dated August 10, 1972).

YO3CCC: When did you receive your first major awards and distinctions?

YO4AUL: In 1983, I achieved **First-Class Sports Classification**, and in 1984 I became a member of the **YO DX Club**. Also in 1984, I was awarded the title of **Master of Sport** in recognition of my achievements in VHF/UHF amateur radio activities. In 1990, I obtained my **Class I amateur radio licence**.



YO3CCC: What equipment did you start out with after obtaining your transmitting licence?

YO4AUL: I made my first QSOs using homebrew equipment for the 7 MHz band, based on circuits published by Gheorghe Stănculescu, YO7DZ. The setup consisted of a vacuum-tube superheterodyne receiver and a tube transmitter using a GU-50 in the final amplifier stage. For tuning and alignment, I used a grid-dip meter borrowed from the Radio Club and a neon lamp. The VFO dial was calibrated rather approximately, mainly by ear. I remember always making sure to transmit slightly higher in frequency than the station operating near the lower band edge, just to be certain I wasn't transmitting outside the amateur band.

YO3CCC: What antennas did you use?

YO4AUL: I used a folded dipole for the 40-meter band, installed approximately six meters above the roof of the four-story apartment building where I lived.

YO3CCC: What equipment did you use on 28 MHz?

YO4AUL: On that band, I used an A7A radio set provided by the Radio Club, which I modified using Russian metal-envelope vacuum tubes. Despite the simplicity of the equipment, I worked many DX stations during that period. Propagation seemed better back then, too, and there was much less QRM and QRN.

YO3CCC: What was the first commercially manufactured amateur radio equipment you acquired?

YO4AUL: Around 1973, I bought a second-hand TRIO vacuum-tube receiver and a 4BTV vertical antenna. For transmitting, I used a Plessey SSB kit. I operated with that equipment for several years, achieving very good results on the 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz bands.

YO3CCC: And what was your first commercially manufactured transceiver?

YO4AUL: Around 1977, I managed to acquire my first factory-built transceiver, a Yaesu FT-7, delivering 20 watts on all the traditional HF amateur bands.

YO3CCC: What equipment did you initially use for VHF/UHF operating?

YO4AUL: Later, I added homebrew transverters for 144 and 432 MHz to that transceiver.

YO3CCC: How did you manage to install antennas on the roof of your apartment building?

YO4AUL: At that time, the roof was crowded with television antennas pointed towards Bulgaria to receive Bulgarian TV broadcasts. As a result, I had to limit my antenna installations to the space available on top of the elevator machinery room above my stairwell. That meant I could mainly install VHF/UHF and 50 MHz antennas.

YO3CCC: Did anyone offer you advice or guidance when you first became involved in meteor scatter operating?

YO4AUL: In my VHF/UHF activities, I received valuable guidance from Iulius Suli, YO2IS, and Dietmar Schmidt, YO7VS. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for helping me make my first meteor scatter QSOs. I am also particularly grateful to YO2IS for sending me the *DUBUS* magazine free of charge for many years. When I first started operating on the 2-meter band, not even a single QSO had been completed between Constanța and Bucharest, and many people claimed that such a contact was simply impossible.

YO3CCC: What equipment did you initially use on 432 MHz?

YO4AUL: On the 432 MHz band, I used a 432-to-28 MHz receiving converter and a frequency tripler built around a power transistor operating as a varactor diode.

YO3CCC: And what about 1296 MHz?

YO4AUL: On the 1296 MHz band, I used a homebrew 1296-to-144 MHz receiving converter and a 432-to-1296 MHz frequency tripler. With this equipment, I successfully worked **RT5JG, located in grid square KN64RQ, on 1296 MHz CW on August 11, 1991.**

YO3CCC: Were your VHF/UHF antennas commercially manufactured?

YO4AUL: No. All my directional antennas for 144, 432, and 1296 MHz were homebrew.

YO3CCC: When did you acquire your first commercially manufactured VHF/UHF transceivers?

YO4AUL: During the 1980s, I managed to obtain two second-hand transceivers, a Yaesu FT-290R and an FT-790R, for the 144 and 432 MHz bands. The FT-290R still works perfectly today, approximately 30 years after it was manufactured. Because of my high-speed meteor scatter transmissions, I attracted the attention of the Securitate, Romania's communist-era secret police. They investigated me to find out what those suspicious transmissions were, since their monitoring equipment was unable to decode them.

YO3CCC: What was the first commercially manufactured transceiver you acquired?

YO4AUL: For HF operating, I also used a second-hand NEC CQ110 hybrid transceiver, which I restored myself. Around 1997, I acquired a Yaesu FT-920, which I used extensively, particularly on the 50 MHz band. Around 2005, I managed to upgrade my station equipment by purchasing a Yaesu FT-897D, which I still use mainly for VHF/UHF operating, and a Yaesu FT-2000 for HF and 50 MHz.

YO3CCC: Is there any amateur radio band you haven't explored?

YO4AUL: I should mention that I have operated, and remain active, on all allocated amateur bands from **160 meters through 23 centimeters**, using all operating modes, including digital modes.

I hope to qualify for DXCC awards on ten different bands in the near future.

YO3CCC: What other awards have you earned over the years?

YO4AUL: I have earned the DXCC, WAC, and WAS awards in CW, Phone, and digital modes.

In 1986, the Romanian Amateur Radio Federation officially recognized my distance records on the 144 and 432 MHz bands (see FRR Information Bulletin No. 12/1987). In 1990, I received the **UKW-EU-D-TROPHY No. 126**, issued by DARC in recognition of my achievements on the 2-meter band.

YO3CCC: Given your rather limited space, how do you manage all your antennas?

YO4AUL: Since I am restricted to a single antenna mast installed on top of the elevator machinery room, I cannot install all the antennas I own at the same time. Consequently, in some years I am more active on 144, 432, and 1296 MHz; in other years, I concentrate on 50 MHz; and in still others, I focus on the HF bands.

YO3CCC: Have you operated VHF/UHF mobile? What about portable?

YO4AUL: I have operated both mobile and portable on 144 MHz while traveling around Romania. I used a Yaesu FT-51R handheld transceiver, a 5/8-wave mobile antenna mounted on the car, and a portable five-element directional antenna.

YO3CCC: Have you ever operated packet radio?

YO4AUL: I was among the first to assemble a computer using circuit boards supplied by LIXCO. Before the advent of the Internet, I established some of the first packet radio links from Constanța and maintained a regular 144 MHz packet radio connection with Bucharest through Costel, YO3ACX.

YO3CCC: I know that you are passionate about building your own radio equipment.

YO4AUL: Apart from operating on the amateur bands, I have always been passionate about electronics and homebrewing. I built many of the devices and instruments I needed myself, including absorption wavemeters and grid-dip meters, noise generators, SWR and RF reflectometers, measurement bridges, dummy loads, receiving converters and transverters, low-noise RF amplifiers (LNAs), antenna switches, signal generators and reference oscillators, frequency counters operating up to 3 GHz, radio-to-computer interfaces, electronic memory keyers, frequency triplers for 432 MHz and 1296 MHz, crystal filters and RF filters, power supplies, RF power amplifiers, antenna tuners and matching units, various types of antennas, and much more.



YO3CCC: Have you written any articles about amateur radio?

YO4AUL: I have written and published several articles on amateur radio. Around 1990–1991, I had a regular column in *Radioamator YO* magazine entitled *Rubrica ultrascurtistului (The VHF/UHF Operator's Column)*.

YO3CCC: When did you create your amateur radio website?

YO4AUL: In 1997, I launched my first amateur radio website, <http://www.qsl.net/yo4aul/>, entitled *Online Electronic Magazine for Romanian Radio Amateurs*. It later served as inspiration for others who went on to create their own amateur radio websites. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to update it recently, but I hope to do so in the near future. I also have a callsign information page on [QRZ.com](http://www.qrz.com).

YO3CCC: Do you participate in amateur radio contests?

YO4AUL: I'm not a particularly dedicated contester, and my operating location is far from ideal for competitive operating. My station is located in an apartment building in the city center, where there is a high level of man-made electrical noise. A taller neighboring building obstructs the path towards the YO5 and YO8 call areas, and I have approximately 35 meters of feedline between the shack and the antenna.

Despite these limitations, I have participated mainly in VHF/UHF and 50 MHz contests, achieving satisfactory results considering the operating conditions. I haven't participated very often in Romanian 80-meter contests because of the lack of space for a suitable antenna. It was only in recent years that I finally managed to install a dipole for the 80- and 160-meter bands.

YO3CCC: Could you mention some of your contest results and rankings?

YO4AUL: Here are some of the results I have achieved in various contests, listed in chronological order:

- **CQ WPX SSB Contest, 1975** — Romania, 14 MHz band, Single Operator: **2nd place**.
- **4th YO International VHF/UHF Championship, August 1981** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **3rd place**.
- **Romanian National VHF/UHF Championship, August 1982** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **YO International VHF/UHF Championship, August 1982** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **Buzludzha International VHF/UHF Contest, Bulgaria, 1983** — **1st place**.
- **Romanian National VHF/UHF Championship, August 1986** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **YO International VHF/UHF Championship, August 1986** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **1st place**.

- **YO-60 VHF/UHF Contest, July 21–24, 1986** — Category B: **3rd place**.
- **15th Anniversary of the Republic Contest, 1986** — Category C, Junior Single Operator, Fixed Station: **3rd place**.
- **25th Romanian National VHF/UHF Championship, August 1987** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **YO International VHF/UHF Championship, August 1987** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **26th Romanian National VHF/UHF Championship, August 1988** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **4th place**.
- **YO International VHF/UHF Championship, August 1988** — Single Operator, Fixed Station category: **1st place**.
- **UK Six Metre Group Contest, 1998** — 50 MHz band: **1st place**.
- **Italian Field Day Ciociaria Contest, 1999** — 50 MHz band: **1st place**.
- **YO VHF/UHF "A Full Summer Day" Contest, 2007** — **1st place**.
- **Romanian National VHF/UHF Championship, 2007** — Single Operator, 432 MHz category: **3rd place**.
- **"La Mulți Ani YO" Contest, 2010** — 80-meter band: **3rd place**.

Interview conducted on December 13, 2010.