The Man in the Mooney. Howard "Hap" Harper discovered Groveland and Pine Mountain Lake Airport in the 1970s. Hap had been a Marine Corps lieutenant and pilot during World War II. He would escape from the hustle and bustle of the Bay Area to Pine Mountain Lake. "For four decades, Mr. Harper supplemented his radio career by selling real estate in the Sierra foothills, often flying prospective clients in his plane to inspect property."[1]

But there was more to life than a radio career and selling real estate; there were jokes to be laughed at and stories to be told. He opened Hap Harper's Pine Mountain Inn,[2] which quickly became a favorite local gathering place for a meal, cocktails, and a good time.

Hap's Pine Mountain Inn was in Big Oak Flat, where Around the Horn Brewing Company is today. Before Hap, it was Henderson's Lumber Mill, then transformed into Pigg's Market, a grocery store of sorts. By the '70s, it was a nightclub called Bobby McGee's, probably named for Janis Joplin's #1 single in 1971, "Me and Bobby McGee".[3] After Hap, it was the Big Oak Saloon and Restaurant, then a Subway franchise that couldn't weather the seasonal ups and downs.

Howard "Hap" Harper was legendary. He was the "World's First Airborne Traffic Reporter", launching a new radio industry segment. It started in the 1950s and '60s when Hap was doing "in the air" weather reporting. It was funny because everyone knew what the weather was. Spotting an auto accident on the Bay Bridge one day, he described the aftermath and paved the airways for a new industry. Hap was heard on Bay Area radio stations for over 30 years, reporting the traffic. He had a big laugh, quick humor, and his often off-color jokes made commuter life more bearable.

His popular traffic reports were heard on KSFO, KFRC, KNBR, and others. Hap Harper (1925-2006) stands out in the Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame as the man in the Mooney, redesigning traffic reporting.

Excerpt from the book *Echo Four Five: Portrait of the Groveland Airport*

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[1] *SFgate.com "Radio's Hap Harper" (10/07/2006).*

[2] *"My Town: A Groveland Kid Remembers" (2018) by Dave Gookin.*

[3] *Wikipedia.org "Me and Bobby McGee". The song was written by Kris Kristofferson, originally performed by Roger Miller, and Janis Joplin's 1971 release topped the U.S. singles chart.*