

## **Meet COOPER the Therapy Dog**

**Okay, so Cooper isn't technically a member of our PROBUS club, but his 'person', Barb Sinclair, is our House Chair, looking after the coffee and other refreshments for our in-person meetings. Since we haven't had refreshments for some time, Cooper makes a more interesting bio 😊**

**Cooper is a 12-year-old golden doodle (half golden retriever, half poodle) who has always had the most gentle personality, and a very huggable coat – that doesn't shed! And those are the main reasons that Barb decided to devote some of her retirement time (and Cooper's) to the St John Ambulance Therapy Dog program. The dogs in this program are not trained for it, per se, but they are carefully evaluated in a 3-hour session with other dogs to ensure that they have the right personality for visiting in a variety of situations. They are then mentored by an experienced Therapy Dog team for several visits, until the new team is comfortable on their own.**

**Unfortunately, the program has been shut down during Covid, but Cooper was recently recognized with a service award for completing 75 visits over the previous 2 years. Together, he and Barb visited weekly at Port Perry Place, plus regular appearances at Durham College, Trent University, CMHA Durham and various public schools. They had also just started a new initiative with the Oshawa Fire Department, visiting with first responders at Station 5 on a weekly basis, but that, too, was halted due to Covid.**

**Cooper is now focused on visiting with as many of our King's Bay neighbours as possible on every walk, and his favourites are the ones with treats! Although he will probably not return to regular visiting due to his age, it has been a very rewarding experience, and one that we would encourage others to investigate if you think your dog has the right qualities.**