

16 years and counting

WE WONDER WHETHER founder Larry Kurtz really imagined 16 years ago how successful Orangeville's Blues & Jazz Festival would become.

We see it as nothing short of amazing that the festival has grown to the point of bringing an estimated 30,000 fans to a town of similar population, and that it has done so as a not-for-profit organization with a volunteer board of directors and little budgeted revenue beyond a token \$5.00 fee to two venues, the Main Stage and the Opera House.

As you'll see elsewhere in this week's paper, Mr. Kurtz says the festival has come a long way over the years.

Attributing the festival's success to "just hard work and having a really good team of people who are dedicated to it," he says that back in 2002, at the beginning, "I was a two-person wood-working business, and there's 200 volunteers who step up now."

His goal all along has been to bring in "the best of the best in Canada, internationally as well," and he attributes some of the success to Orangeville's size, with fans now coming to hear "great talent out there that needs to be heard," with much of the talent still local.