

Elmvale Acres 'monsterologist' introduces young readers to Frankenstein classic

BY ERIN MCCRACKEN

Two hundred years after Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was published, an Elmvale Acres writer and scientist is marking the anniversary by introducing young readers to the classic tale.

Norman Marcotte blended his science background with his passion for writing to bring to life his first children's chapter book, *Frankenstein's Science Project*.

Marcotte is also a self-described "amateur monsterologist."

"I've loved monsters for a long time," he said. "The passages and the wording came pretty easily. I don't know why, maybe because I'm a monsterologist and I could just imagine and it just came. There were so many

possibilities for humour in this."

Marcotte's penchant for horror developed when he picked up a Stephen King book in high school for the first time. He can also remember being allowed to stay up on Halloween to watch horror movies all night long as a kid.

"My mom let us watch those with her," he said.

There were the classics, of course. Dracula and Frankenstein. All in black and white. He's also a fan of the wolfman and the mummy.

"It's a bit mysterious," Marcotte said of the draw. "I also like the science part of monsters – how they came about."

While much of the science involved in Frankenstein's creation was intentionally left out of the original book,

Marcotte wanted to explore that in his own work of fiction. That allowed him to put a new spin on a classic tale for

The family was up at their cottage in 2015 and the kids asked their dad for a scary campfire story. Marcotte had

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readers ages eight to 11, who likely don't know the story yet.

"It's a way to demystify monsters or things that are scary. If you know, we understand and they're not as scary," Marcotte said.

His son and two daughters, ages nine, 11 and 13, also inspired his book idea.

recently read the original *Frankenstein* book and started with an abridged version of that.

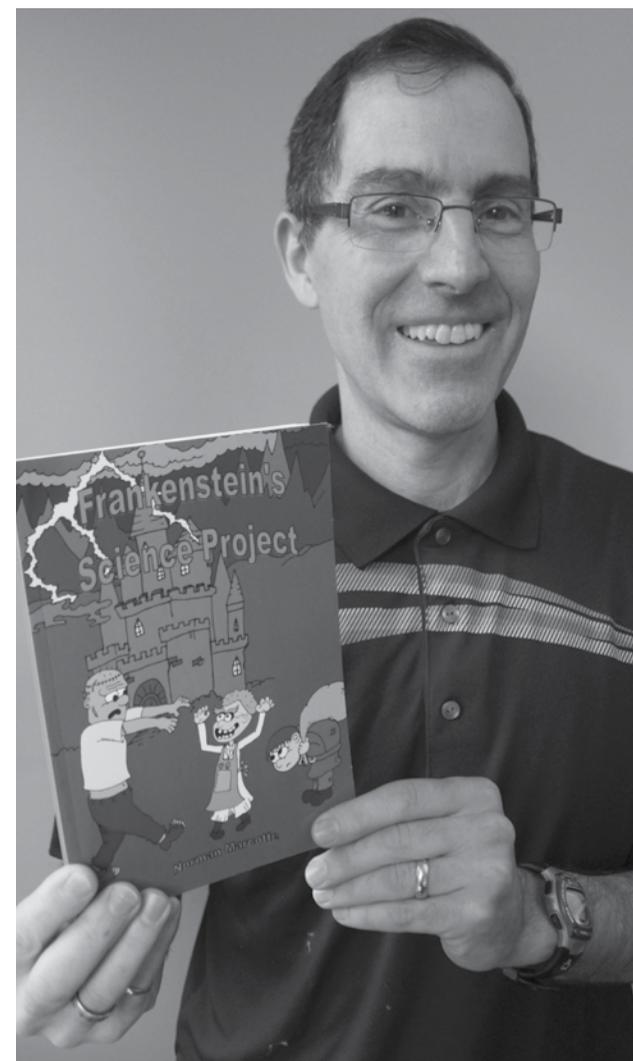
"Based on what my wife's reaction was, I made it very light," he said of leaving out the scarier elements. "They liked the story and I transformed that into the book."

Marcotte's story follows the adventures of Dr. Frankenstein, known as Dr. F in the book, and his science experiment.

It took about two-and-a-half years to write and edit, and while he pitched the story to several publishers, he decided to self-publish because he wanted the book to come out in time for the anniversary of the publication of *Frankenstein*.

The original book and his adaptation offer some similarities around the theme of creation and with some of the characters, but Marcotte left out the violence from Shelley's original and injected more humour and, of course, science.

Marcotte has a background in chemical engineering and has long worked at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada,



Erin McCracken photo

Elmvale Acres resident and self-described 'amateur monsterologist' Norman Marcotte recently published his first children's chapter book, called 'Frankenstein's Science Project.'

a federal agency that funds university research.

"You don't necessarily think of all these when you write the book," he said of the themes he included. "But little things, because of your background, they just come out."

His 136-page chapter book, which includes illustrations by Vancouver's Alex Bjelica, was first published in January, but it's not Marcotte's inaugural self-published work.

He published a memoir in 2014 based on his running of the Boston Marathon in 1997 called *Take 10 and Reach the*

Boston Marathon.

Marcotte has already been working on more books for young readers, including a second monster book about Dracula.

"He's just too popular," Marcotte said.

Frankenstein's Science Project is priced at \$10 to \$12 and is available for purchase at Amazon, IndieBound and Lulu Press.

For details, please visit unrealfrankenstein.com or normanmarcotte.com.

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