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many short stories and articles over the last 13 years) and eventually a publisher (most recent book: *The Pelican in the Desert: and Other Stories of the Family Farm*). As a teenager, I was an amateur astronomer and read an occasional book on astronomy or science but read fiction mainly in school. Knowing I liked to read about Mars, my mother gave me a copy of *The Martian Chronicles*. "But it's fiction," she cautioned. "Aw . . ." I said. But I felt an obligation to at least try to read it. And I was swept away by the imaginative stories and vivid imagery. I'd been doing average in English literature classes before that, but this book made me interested in reading—on many topics—and I got straight 1's during my senior year (in English Composition). I went on to major in English at UNL and received a B.A. (Distinction).



*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* by Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Mark Twain was an extraordinary writer, but most of his books that I really like are books of my youth. This is the only one I discovered as an adult, and it created quite an impression upon me. It chronicles Joan's public life through the eyes of a fictional character who is her childhood friend and stays with her to the end. This was a labor of love for Clemens (he didn't use his pen name, Mark Twain, because he didn't want people to see the name and automatically think it was another humorous book), and he did such a good enough job with it that every once in a while I pull the book out and dust it off for another re-reading.