The Sandcastle Girls by Chris Bohjalian is a sweeping historical novel that combines the story of the 1915 Armenian genocide and the developing love relationship between two unlikely companions. The story takes place in Syria. Elizabeth Endicott arrives in this foreign place to deliver food and aid to refugees of the Armenian genocide. She becomes friends with Armen, a young Armenian engineer who has already lost his wife and infant daughter. Fast forward to the present day, where we meet Laura Petrosian, a novelist living in suburban New York. Although her grandparents' ornate Pelham home was affectionately nicknamed "The Ottoman Annex," Laura has never really given her Armenian heritage much thought. But when an old friend calls, claiming to have seen a newspaper photo of Laura's grandmother promoting an exhibit at a Boston museum, Laura embarks on a journey back through her family's history that reveals love, loss - and a wrenching secret that has been buried for generations. FIC Bohj  Linda’s Pick

Broken Harbor by Tana French A family is murdered in a home situated in a failed housing development on Ireland’s northwest coast. The department super pulls in the ace detective with the best solve record, who happens to have a history with that place. French has an enormous talent for capturing the Irish dialect and slang in her dialogue, which I really enjoy, and her prose is lyrical and vivid. All the characters – detectives, victims, suspects - are very believable; she unravels their inner motives slowly, but deliberately, realistically. The book is written in “real time”; I got impatient, and wanted to skip ahead, but did that with her first novel and missed too many twists and details that were important. Judith’s pick

I’ve found that when I read an historical fiction novel, I like to follow it with a non-fiction title from the same time period. The two stories enhance each other and add to my understanding of the time period. A recent pair Jack, 1939 by Francine Mathews is a fictional account of JFK, as a young adult being asked to spy on the Nazi’s just before WWII began. Franklin and Eleanor, an Extraordinary Marriage by Hazel Rowley is a factual account of their famous marriage with an emphasis on the 1930’s when Franklin was President. Linda’s Pick

The Light Keeper’s Legacy by Kathleen Ernst: Though set in Wisconsin’s Door County, there are many similarities to life and history here in northwest Michigan. Museum curator Chloe Ellefson has grabbed an opportunity to be a consultant for the historic lighthouse restoration project on Rock Island, a state park. But a dead woman washes ashore and spoils her solitude. Soon Chloe is deep into the investigation which sends her to research the lighthouse history. Author Ernst skillfully weaves a tale that winds in and out of modern and historical Wisconsin. Fishing rights, women’s roles, and antiquing are just a few of the interesting historical details Chloe delves into in order to solve the mystery. Mary Ann’s pick

Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce. This is a wonderful debut novel from a seasoned BBC radio play writer. Harold Frye has been retired for six months, and one morning he receives a letter from an old friend who is in hospice care up in Scotland. Never mind that he lives on the very southern coast of England, when he leaves to post his reply to her note, he changes his mind and decides to walk to see her. What ensues is a poignant, funny, improbable story that is inspiring and impossible for the reader to put down. There is a surprise ending as well. Mary Ann’s pick.

Istanbul Passage by Joseph Kanon: a historical novel set after WWII in Istanbul. This is an interesting story which occurs as the cold war begins; it contains an accurate description of the atmosphere and conditions existing in Istanbul after the war. Roger’s Pick
**Last Man Standing by David Baldacci:** “an explosive psychological thriller about a man desperate to find answers – from the secret terror he has kept from himself, to his unbearable guilt.” (book jacket). This is a great read for mystery lovers. *Roger’s Pick*

**The Testament of Mary by Colm Toibin.** “Provocative, haunting, lyrical” are some of the words used to describe the book. The Mary of this novella is not the saintly icon passed down to us over the millennia, but a portrayal of a flesh and blood mother, nearing death, who remains bitter, grief-stricken and guilt-ridden years after the death of her crucified son. For me, this book did not so much diminish the myth of Mary as enhance my empathy for a woman unable to be reconciled with a terrible loss. *Beth’s Pick*

**Why Does the World Exist?: An Existential Detective Story by Jim Holt:** “…In this astonishing and profound work, an irreverent sleuth traces the riddle of existence from the ancient world to modern times.” If you watch “The Big Bang Theory” as I do there are two levels… the funny/slapstick sitcom and the “other” level. That “other” level being: name-that-cosmologist, theologian, particle physicist, philosopher, mystic or others and what he or she has to do “… with life, the universe and everything? Holt writes of great thinkers in mathematics, quantum physics, artificial intelligence, theology, philosophy, and literature. All were asked by Holt to give direction and insight as “…why there is something, rather than nothing…” Holt provides a welcome, thoughtful read, whether your worldview tends toward Spinoza (in which “reality is a self-sustaining causal loop: the world creates us, and we in turn create the world”) or like Stephen Hawking, you are still searching for the final theory of everything. *Dwain’s Pick*

**Elegance of the Hedgehog, by Muriel Barbery.** The quirky characters: Paloma, a 12-year-old genius, and Renée, the quietly cultured concierge of an elegant Parisian apartment building, hide their true personalities and finest qualities from the world. They discover their kindred souls when a wealthy Japanese man named Ozu arrives in the building and befriends them both. This is a moving, funny, yet philosophical novel that encourages us to consider the inner lives of the inconspicuous among us. The movie, *The Hedgehog*, based on the book, captures the flavor and fairy tale quality of the novel along with bit and pieces of Paris. *Davonne’s pick*

**Ireland: A Novel, by Frank Delaney.** Audio version. By alternating folklore and history with the story of the O’Mara family, Delaney paints a vivid portrait of Ireland and fits both storyteller — seanachi -- and family into it. History, legend, memory and myth are woven into a satisfying epic. *Davonne’s pick*

**Sookie Stackhouse Novels (Southern Vampire Series) by Charlaine Harris:** This mystery series is alluring. The main character Sookie is quirky, hilarious and down to earth. Sookie, along with side-kicks Bill and Eric, are characters who will stay with you long after you’ve finished the books. *Laura’s pick*

**Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher:** Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a mysterious box with his name on it. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker, his classmate and crush, who committed suicide two weeks earlier. On tape, Hannah explains that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he’ll find out how he made the list. *Laura’s pick*

**Son by Lois Lowry:** In a society where there are no emotions, strict rules and no memories, Claire is a birth mother who develops a strong connection to the product she carries for nine months—a connection that is supposed to be impossible. The product is stolen from her after she gives birth, which propels her on a quest to get it back. In the society that brought you Jonas from *The Giver*, Claire’s story is well-written and intense. *Son* is Lowry at her best. *Laura’s pick*