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Shelf Life
LARRY COX
Freelance

'Arizona' Book Review

'The **Living Cosmos**: Our Search for Life in the Universe' Book Review

By Chris **Impey** (Random House, \$27.95)

Grade: A

At 44, **Impey** was the youngest person ever to be awarded the position of University Distinguished Professor at the University of Arizona in 2000. As vice president of the American Astronomical Society and a member of its teaching board, he is one of the most respected experts in the field of astrobiology, the study of life in space. Astrobiology is one of the fastest growing and most popular fields of science.

In his excellent new book, **Impey** explores the foundations of this rapidly growing discipline, where it's going and what we're likely to find at the end of our search. **Impey's** text is fairly technical and not a casual read, but it is, nevertheless, a fascinating look at what might exist beyond our planet.

"The **Living Cosmos**" begins with an overview including the earliest steps of science when Copernicus revealed that the earth was not the center of the universe but simply a planet circling the sun. From that simple discovery, science was never the same. The most intriguing chapters document cutting-edge research and the fact that our view of the universe is in constant flux. Astrobiologists throughout the world struggle with mind-boggling questions including the meaning of life, whether it exists and in what form outside of planet Earth? The mere thought that alien biological systems might be a reality is both exciting and, yes, a little frightening.

"The **Living Cosmos**" is more than just a riveting book about experiment and discovery. **Impey** documents our past and predicts our future with both wisdom and wit. His work is accessible, lively and highly recommended.