<|end_of_text|>The science of life detection may get a boost from ongoing work in ChileâĢĻs remote Atacama Desert. Said to be one of the most arid regions on Earth, the Atacama is a prime testing ground for an automated, solar-powered rover named Zoe, which was developed by Carnegie Mellon UniversityâĢĻs Molecular Biosensor and Imaging Center. The idea: use the Atacama as an analogue to Mars, drafting the needed protocols for life detection in hostile environments.ĊAccording to a NASA press release, âĢľScientists also plan to map the habitats of the area, including its morphology, geology, mineralogy, texture, physical and elemental properties of rocks and soils; document how life modifies its environment; characterize the geo- and biosignatures of microbial organisms and draft science protocols to support a discovery of life.âĢİĊTechnology buffs may want to download CMUâĢĻs EventScope software, which scientists will use to see the Atacama through the âĢĺeyesâĢĻ of the rover. Eventscope is available here. The project is part of NASAâĢĻs Astrobiology Science and Technology Program for Exploring Planets. Its Web site houses images, field reports and background documents.<|end_of_text|>When the cataclysm reached The Dalles in the Columbia River Gorge six hours later, people wandering around what