

## ASTRONOMY TODAY



**T**his stunning combination of four Hubble Space Telescope images shows the “Bubble Nebula,” an almost perfectly spherical shell of glowing gas roughly 10 light years across, lying some 8,000 light-years away in the constellation Cassiopeia. The bubble is in reality the result of a high-speed wind of hot gas flowing outward from a young, bright star (visible at left of center in the front cover image) and running into the cool interstellar gas from which the star formed. Why isn’t the star at the center of the bubble? Astronomers don’t yet know, but understanding star formation and the interaction between stars and their surroundings is one of the central unsolved problems in astronomy today.

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