

# **Galactic Wreckage in Stephan's Quintet**

**A clash among members of a famous galaxy quintet reveals an assortment of stars across a wide range of colors and ages.**

**This Hubble Space Telescope portrait of Stephan's Quintet was one of the first images taken after the May 2009 servicing mission to upgrade the Earth-orbiting observatory.**

**Stephan's Quintet, as the name implies, is a group of five galaxies. The name, however, is a bit of a misnomer. Studies have shown that the group member at upper left is actually a foreground galaxy about seven times closer to Earth than the rest of the group.**

**Three of the galaxies have distorted shapes, elongated spiral arms, and long, gaseous tidal tails containing many star clusters, proof of their close encounters. These interactions have sparked a frenzy of star birth in the central pair of galaxies. This drama is being played out against a rich**

**backdrop of faraway galaxies.**

**The fifth galaxy at bottom left, is a normal-looking elliptical galaxy that is less affected by the interactions.**

**For more information on Tactile Astronomy projects from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, go to the following page at the Web site, Amazing Space:  
<http://amazing-space.stsci.edu/tactile-astronomy/>**