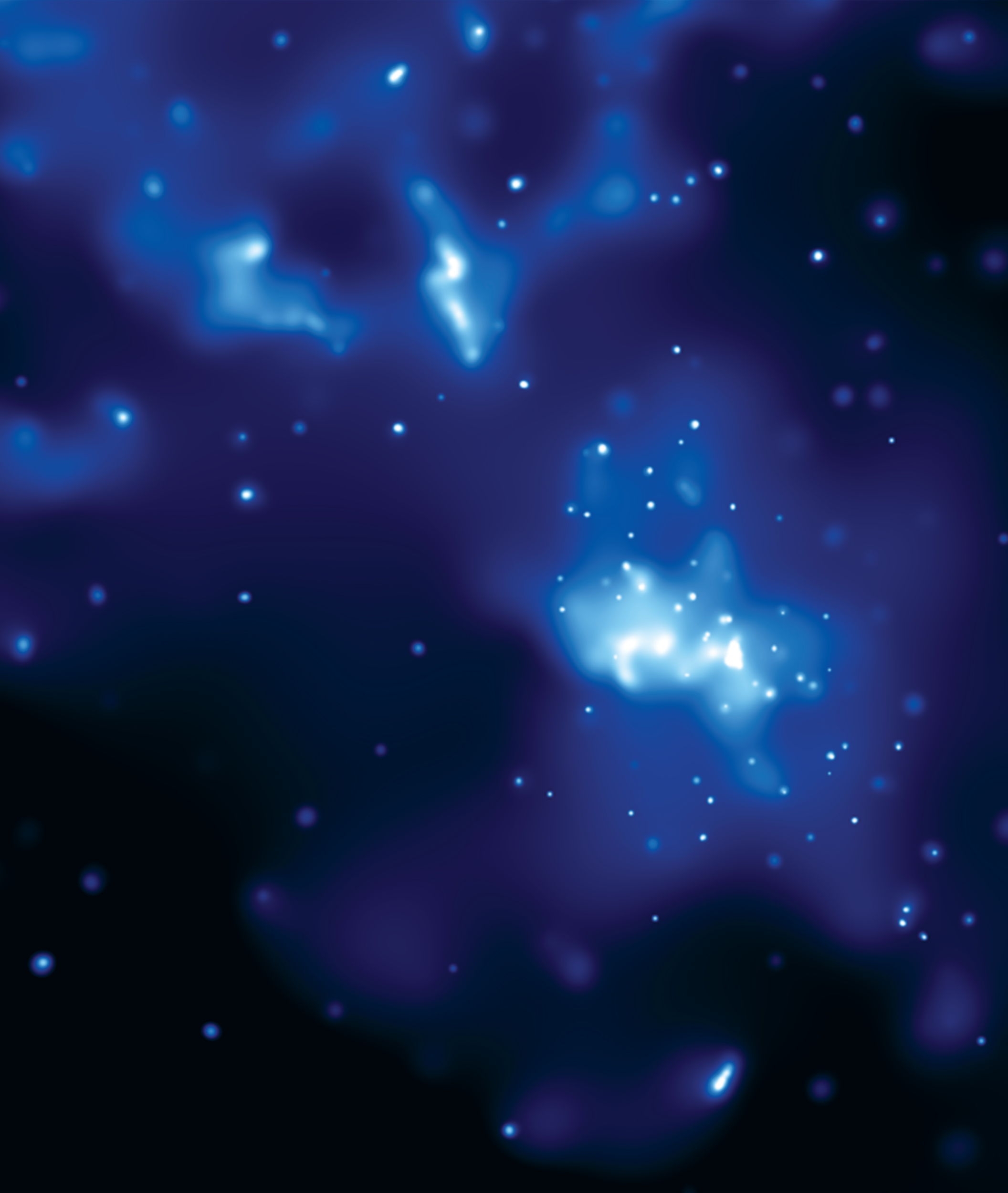




GALACTIC CENTER

This Chandra image shows evidence for a light echo generated by the Milky Way’s supermassive black hole, a.k.a. Sagittarius A*. Astronomers believe a mass equivalent to the planet Mercury was devoured by the black hole about 50 years earlier, causing an X-ray outburst which then reflected off gas clouds near Sagittarius A*. Studying this light echo gives a crucial history of activity from the black hole, and it also illuminates and probes the gas clouds near the center of the Galaxy.

DECEMBER2008						
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