

Owner mounts all-out campaign to find missing cat

SEARCH: Signs describing Bette adorn city buses and several local businesses.

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A lost tabby that likes jumping into cars and showering with people is riding around on city buses — as a missing animal poster.

Owner Sharon Gratrix said when the black-spotted Bengal stopped returning to her Northwood home in early June, she slapped down \$600 to post Bette's mug on the back of People Mover buses.

"I was desperate to find her," Gratrix said.

She spent another \$200 blanketing coffee shops, gyms and other businesses with placards of the perky-eared cat whose golden coat glitters in sunlight. Oh, and don't forget about the \$500 reward for information leading to Bette's return.

The money is worth it because Bette's fabulous, Gratrix said.

"She's family," Gratrix said.

Bette was a kitten when Gratrix bought her 4½ years ago from a Louisiana breeder. Gratrix, an apartment manager, organized a motor home trip around the adoption.



REWARD FOR LOST CAT

Bette (pronounced Bet)

4 year old Spayed Bengal with Microchip

Missing Since June 12 Near Airport

She loves cars and may have hitched a ride

Please Call Sharon 229-3048



Sharon Gratrix hired Great Originals to create a sign to help locate her missing cat, Bette.

The Bengal's namesake is "The Divine Miss M," Bette Midler, because the breeder dubbed the short-haired kitten "The Divine One."

The feline Bette is lean, long and looks underfed even when she isn't. That's the Bengal in her, Gratrix said. So is her fondness for water.

Cat and owner showered together when Bengal jumped in. They slept together with Gratrix's two bulldogs and husband every night, with Bengal sometimes curling atop a dog.

On a leash, say along Seward's busy harbor, Bette strutted for attention.

"People would just flock to her."

Gratrix doesn't know how Bette went missing. The cat prowled the neighborhood not far from Stevens International Airport, but never missed dinner or breakfast until June 12.

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BETTE: *Cat likes showers, car rides*

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There's been lots of construction this summer, and the cat could have leapt into a construction vehicle or car and ended up anywhere, said Gratrix.

Lots of people have helped with the search, Gratrix said. People Mover gave her weeks of free advertising after her contract was up. City pound employees call when look-alikes turn up.

Gratrix visited there twice daily, but started putting a few days between each visit after too much disappointment.

Bette sports a forehead scar between the ears. She's micro-chipped, so the city pound or a veterinarian with the right equipment can pull up her address.

Gratrix has taken more than 50 calls from helpful Alaskans, but no luck. Her cell phone is 229-3048.

"Even if I found out she's dead, at least I would know something."

Find Alex deMarban online at adn.com/contact/edemarban or call 257-4310.