

## Retail Therapy

By HUNTER L. GORINSON

### Old City Green

902 N St. NW  
202-412-2489  
[www.oldcitygreen.com](http://www.oldcitygreen.com)

Old City green bills itself as a place “where plants and people come together,” and for owner Frank Asher, that motto not only underlines his goal of beautifying homes, lawns and gardens from Shaw to Dupont Circle, but informing his neighbors and customers in the process.

With a selection of annuals as well as native perennials and shrubs -- Black-Eyed Susans, serviceberries, asters, and several varieties of fern, to name but a few -- Asher and his team see their wares as beneficial in more than just an aesthetic sense.

“A lot of times landscapers use

plants that might have a lot of immediate pop or look, but are invasive and not good for the environment,” Asher told MCDC. “Native plants may offer berries for birds, flowers for honeybees, hummingbirds and butterflies. It really just helps the whole ecosystem.”

To that end, Old City green also doubles as a landscape design and maintenance service, Fairies’ Crossing, which makes the best of the limited green space of inner-city houses. Locally oriented in every sense, Asher, who lives steps away from his N Street garden center, offers 15 percent discounts to neighborhood residents and, through



Frank Asher (left) and the Old City Green team get their hands dirty daily in Shaw.

the end of July, 25 percent off plants to returning customers with spring receipts. The space is also available for outdoor events with OCg itself hosting a lamb roast this fall to benefit So Others Might Eat.



It's easy to lose all sense of time passing amongst the shelves at Idle Time Books.

### Idle Time Books

2467 18th St. NW  
202-232-4774  
[idletimebooks.com](http://idletimebooks.com)

Twenty-eight years is an impressive run for any local business -- especially an independent bookseller trafficking in the used, rare and out of print. Idle Time's continued staying power on Adams Morgan's main thoroughway lies in the fact that it might just be Washington's most literate storehouse of affordable reading material.

As perusal of the New Arrivals shelf will evidence, Idle Time certainly knows the caliber of its clientele, so those interested in tracking down James Patterson's latest should look elsewhere. In place of airport thrillers ad nauseam, one finds beach reading for Hill wonks -- like most of Harvard University Press's recent output, including “Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement” (\$4) and “Opium: Uncovering the Politics of the Poppy” (\$4).

## Rags 2 Riches Vintage Boutique

1734 14th St. NW

202-290-2537

[rags2richesvintage.com](http://rags2richesvintage.com)

**T**ransplanted from H St. NE to the 14th & U corridor just last month, Rags 2 Riches offers a new twist on the vintage boutique formula. Instead of thrift store flannels or high-end consignments, R2R casts a very specific eye towards “mod, punk and hip-hop retro” styles. That translates into a brash selection of women’s evening and club wear with one foot in modern era and another firmly planted in the neon saturated, sequin strewn ‘80s.

However, few of the pieces are actually authentic to the era. Instead, owner Erica Rice says she looks for recent, but “gently worn,” boutique brand clothes that embody her store’s not-so-subtle sensibilities. Toronto’s Urban Behavior contributes a petite, black sequin jacket (\$60) to the racks, while Snap and Max Azira offer two of the store’s more eye-catching sundresses in teal and sienna, \$60 each. The real steals for women, however, lie in R2R’s collection of designer sunglasses, where once pricey shades from the likes of Marc Jacobs and Betsy Johnson start at \$30.

There’s also a modest, but reasonably priced assortment of modern men’s casual wear available and a cursory browse around turns up an ample amount of skinny denim (\$50 and up), graphic heavy tees from Williamsburg’s SubScript (\$25) and slacks in seersucker or patchwork pastel (\$40).



Retro looks hit the street -- literally and figuratively -- at 14th St.'s newly opened Rags 2 Riches.

## Green Pets

1722 14th St. NW

202-986-7907

[www.greenpets.com](http://www.greenpets.com)

“Henrietta” hangs alongside Green Pets’ other Acme Co. approved pet pastimes.

Sourced entirely by the owners, Idle Time’s stock covers nearly every conceivable facet of fiction and, especially, non-fiction -- so much so that the store’s categorizations are far more specific than the average college library. For example, material that would fall under “Social Sciences” in a lesser store here gets divvied up between management, employment, working, aging, and poverty.

For both bibliophiles and casual readers, the store’s name should ring especially true as minutes spent browsing slip away.



**W**hen Green Pets first opened on the 14th St. strip 11 years ago, the concept of eco-friendly shopping had yet to penetrate the mainstream, let alone the “meat byproduct” stocked shelves of the average pet store. A decade on, “greenness” may have blossomed into a full-on craze, but the store remains the District’s number one repository for organic and natural pet food and supplies. They even boast a wide array of homeopathic remedies capable of treating nearly any malady -- physical or mental -- afflicting Spot these days.

“The idea here is -- because there’s so many things in the environment [to which pets] are exposed -- to have as many vitamins, minerals and digestive enzymes to meet their needs,” said manager Dexter Howell, a 15 year veteran of the pet business.

Still, unlike most environment conscious boutiques, Green Pets isn’t above a little levity. Howell and owner Brock Benson have brought together a cheeky collection of pet-ertainment capable of distracting animal and owner alike. The Kool Dogz Ice Treat Maker (\$29.99), for instance, encases your canine’s favorite treats in a giant popsicle, while over in the ever popular squeaky toy department, “Henrietta” (\$15.99) -- the name of Green Pet’s bestselling, bikini-clad rubber chicken -- emits a shriek when squeezed that’s unparalleled this side of Janet Leigh. ♦