

The first thing someone notices when they spot Atomic Garage is John Lennon. Or his face, at least. The side of the building is covered in a mural of the late Beatle staring down the street with the words "Love Peace." The front of the store, painted in a bright, Austin Powers inspired 70s design, mimics what shoppers will find just inside the doors.

Walking through Atomic Garage, located in Des Moines' Historic Valley Junction, can be a bit overwhelming at first. The vintage clothing store rents and sells all types of clothing and accessories with a focus on the 70s era. And as Halloween quickly approaches, Atomic Garage offers a jackpot for the perfect decades costume.

Owner Steve Mumma, who also owns A Okay Antiques across the street, has owned Atomic Garage for over 15 years. After a friend closed his shop and had an excess of Levi's jeans to get rid of, Mumma took them off his hands. The rack of Levi's sat in the back of his shop taking up space for almost a year. When the machine shop across the street closed, Mumma agreed the rent the building, which is now Atomic Garage.

"We moved the rack across the street and that's how it started, that damn rack of Levi's," Mumma said. "And now, we don't even sell Levi's."

Although there are no longer Levi's for purchase, many other items are available. When first entering the store, there are an assortment of wigs available for purchase along with vinyl records and other fun pieces from different points in history. Stepping in is like strolling through the decades with each item viewed.

Getting a bit farther in, it's clear that this is not a contemporary clothing store. A display full of white go-go boots for sale sits right across from the cash register, and tie-dyed onesies hang a few feet away.

The rest of the store is filled with racks and racks of colorful clothes tightly packed together, some for rent and some to buy. A red sequined dress hangs on the rack across from a floral hippie frock. There is a rack full of bowling shirts and a display of extravagant fur vests. Vintage signs hang from the ceiling and on the walls advertising Coca-Cola or "The Wizard of Oz."

As October 31 creeps around the corner, last-minute costumes can become a burden to come up with. What sets Atomic Garage apart from other vintage clothing stores is their wide selection of clothing for rent. When a company or a theater group

comes in looking for decade costumes, they're able to get something for everyone. Costumes are also available for rent by individuals, just in time for Halloween.

Apart from poodle skirts and costume rentals, one of the most notable things about the store is the outside. Bright yellows, oranges, pinks and purples make the place stand out from the rest of Historic Valley Junction like a yellow daisy in a field of grass. Looking at Atomic Garage from his store across the street, Mumma got sick of staring at the white building every day. He found a bright colored blouse and brought it to a tattoo artist downtown, asking if they could paint his store like that. And they did.

While the outside of the store may be what draws customers in, the vintage selection is what keeps their attention. It's said don't judge a book by its cover, but for this store, the "cover" gives shoppers exactly the kind of vibe they'll receive when delving into the 70s at Atomic Garage.