

# NEW CENTURY ...SAME STORY

by Grace Halupnik & Sam Rothbardt

With the dawn of a new decade, many wonder how the next 10 years will leave an impact on the rest of time. However, history does repeat itself. As we reflected on the issues and trends society faces going into this decade, we could not shake the glaring similarities between the 1920s and the current 2020s despite the century of difference in time.

As memories fade and new generations emerge, the events of history often resurface. Events that occurred 100 years ago, such as prohibition, are not happening to the same extreme as they did in the 1920s. However, the threat of similar events taking place is present.

While another prohibition will not happen in the near future, restrictions of nicotine have recently been put in place as underage usage and addictions run rampant as well as local restrictions of phone usage within schools. In addition, a lifestyle surrounding materialism and overindulgence has always been the American way.

Similarly, issues such as race and economic di-

vides and foreign conflicts still plague the U.S. as they did 100 years ago. Fixing the wealth gap is a major voting point for voters in the next election, and could determine the next president. Although 1965 ended the Jim Crow Laws, racism and xenophobia are still seen through many parts of the U.S.

On a positive note, an advancement that began 100 years ago is still gaining momentum today: women's involvement in politics. From first being able to vote 1920 to having a woman win the nomination for president, the upgrade of a woman's role in politics has evolved for the better.

Although there are plenty of differences between the 2020s and the 1920s, there are many problems that still linger a century later in America. Through this issue of the Spartan Shield, we hope to examine the concepts that both generations of people face. By making awareness of such issues, hopefully the negative events of the past will cease repeating and the progress made within the last century can continue to further.

## WOMEN GIVEN POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

by Ingrid Hofmann

Not only did the election of 1920 pit Warren G. Harding against Woodrow Wilson, but it was also the first election in which women could vote. After the suffrage movement, which spanned over 70 years from 1848 until 1920, women were given greater political influence after the ratification of the 19th amendment: the right to vote. Later, the women of the 1920's would go on to be remembered as “new women”.

Aside from receiving the right to vote, women also made great strides politically throughout the 1920's, gaining prominent roles and positions in local, state, and federal governments. Women like Florence Ellinwood Allen, who was the first woman to be elected to the highest court in a state after being appointed to the Supreme Court of Ohio, led the way for the women who came after.

Another prominent trailblazer who led women in politics was a leader who resided a little closer to home: Emma J. Harvat. In 1923, Harvat was elected mayor of Iowa City, Iowa—making her the first woman to be elected to lead a US municipality with a population greater than 10,000.

The 1920s continued to bring more political opportunities for women, with over 100 women being appointed to political committees or office. Now, almost 100 years later, women have taken an even greater role in politics, with the United States having had its first female Secretary of State and a female presidential candidate.

The year 2020 brings with it another presidential election, yet this time the election features

several female candidates. One of the most prominent candidates being Elizabeth Warren, who is maintaining a strong spot in the Democratic polls. However, Warren is not the only woman running for the Democratic nomination, with fellow senator Amy Klobuchar and congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard also fighting to receive the nomination as well.

Having the opportunity to vote in the upcoming election, senior Margaret Huang commented on what it would mean to have a female president, “Having a female president would mean that the U.S. takes women seriously enough and that the patriarchal culture of the country has evolved enough to recognize female merit.”

Not only does Huang hope that the 2020 election brings the nation's first female president, but also more women in politics in general. To Huang, this means that there would be more people in politics who represent what she stands for and influence decisions that impact all aspects of her life.

Although  
2020  
may

bring significant change to the White House, a momentous amount of change was brought forth in 2018 when countless women—all emerging from different states, ethnic backgrounds, race, socioeconomic status, etc—were elected to the House of Representatives and Senate, increasing the number of women in Congress from roughly 20 percent to a little over 23 percent.

The spark of women's involvement in politics was lit in the 1920s, and its momentum still continues to this day. While the ratio of men to women in politics is still not equal, it can be expected that women will continue to make substantial strides politically in the coming decade.



## FOREIGN CONFLICT LOOMS OVER COUNTRY

by Grace Halupnik

A century ago, the relief and celebration of the ending of World War I was still fresh in the minds of Americans. Although it was said to be the war to end all wars, 100 years later society is no closer to world peace as the patterns of history appear to be repeating themselves.

Trump kicked off the start of the decade by ordering the execution of General Qassem Soleimani. Soleimani was viewed by the government to have the blood of many US personnel on his hands as well as to be the head of a terrorist organization. However, his death worsened the already poor relations between the US and Iran, and fears of possible retaliation from Iran have left many Americans surmising—somewhat exaggeratedly—that America is on the brink of World War III.

The hashtag #WW3 started trending on social media sites such as Twitter, where it had over 4.1 million mentions. While the hashtag was commonly used to reference the Iran conflict or make jokes about the idea of being drafted into World War III, many students recognize the tensions will most likely not be taken to that extreme of a level. “I do not believe that the assassination will lead to a third world war,” said junior Alex Thorne. “However, I do believe the United States and Iran have some major issues to work out.”

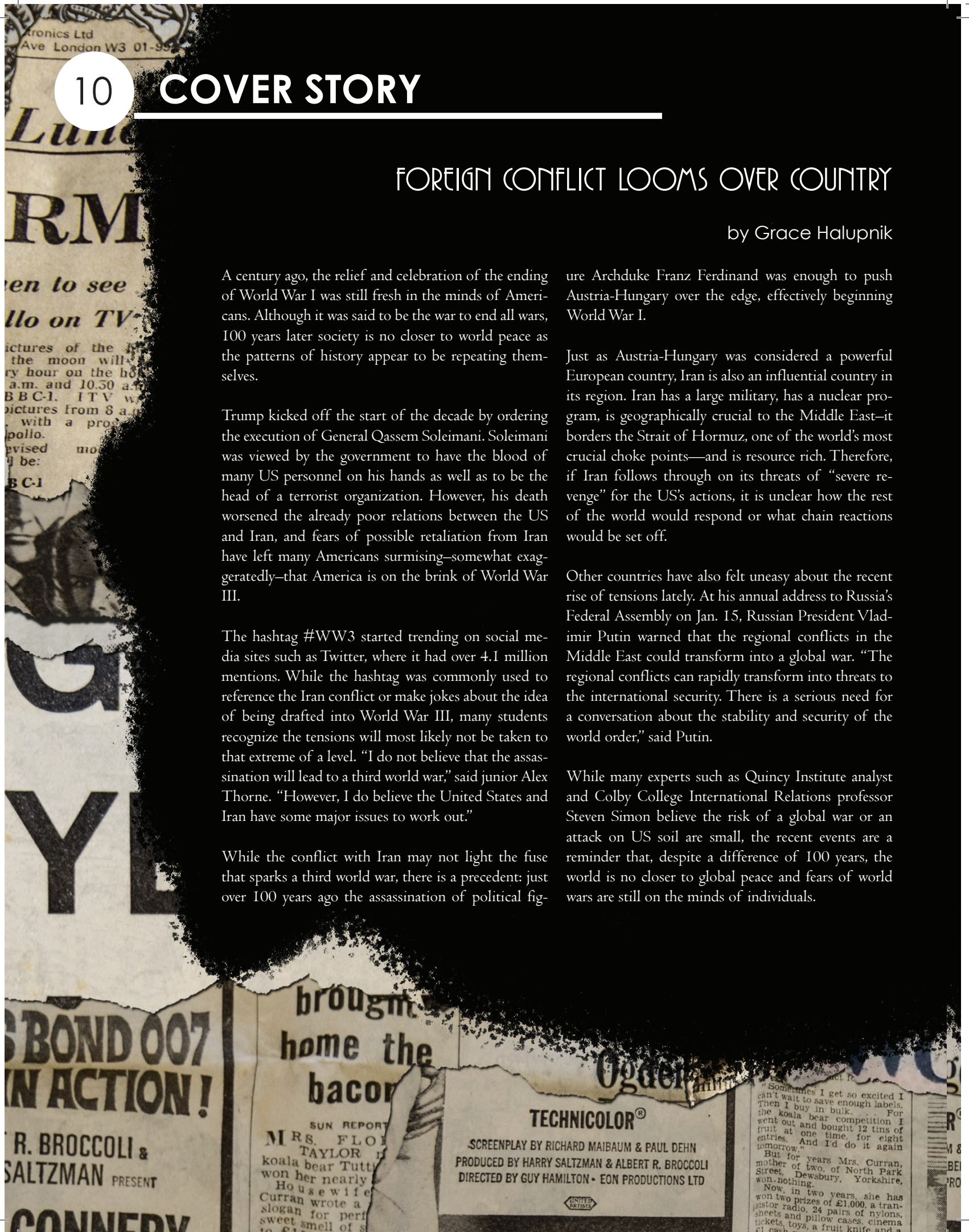
While the conflict with Iran may not light the fuse that sparks a third world war, there is a precedent: just over 100 years ago the assassination of political fig-

ure Archduke Franz Ferdinand was enough to push Austria-Hungary over the edge, effectively beginning World War I.

Just as Austria-Hungary was considered a powerful European country, Iran is also an influential country in its region. Iran has a large military, has a nuclear program, is geographically crucial to the Middle East—it borders the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most crucial choke points—and is resource rich. Therefore, if Iran follows through on its threats of “severe revenge” for the US’s actions, it is unclear how the rest of the world would respond or what chain reactions would be set off.

Other countries have also felt uneasy about the recent rise of tensions lately. At his annual address to Russia’s Federal Assembly on Jan. 15, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that the regional conflicts in the Middle East could transform into a global war. “The regional conflicts can rapidly transform into threats to the international security. There is a serious need for a conversation about the stability and security of the world order,” said Putin.

While many experts such as Quincy Institute analyst and Colby College International Relations professor Steven Simon believe the risk of a global war or an attack on US soil are small, the recent events are a reminder that, despite a difference of 100 years, the world is no closer to global peace and fears of world wars are still on the minds of individuals.



## RACIAL TENSIONS CONTINUE TO RISE

by Sam Rothbardt

Racism has been a pressing issue in the United States for more than 100 years, and there have been many changes to ensure people of all races had the same rights. However, as there was a struggle for rights in the 1920s, it continues into the 2020s.

The 1920s saw the resurfacing of the Klu Klux Klan among other hate groups and other acts against African-Americans. This led to people becoming more segregated and less open-minded despite being decades post-slavery. After the white and black men came back from fighting World War I, the separation between the two races was immense. The period after the war was plagued with segregation that hindered progress.

The 2020s do not have much separation of race, and there is none from the government, but that bodes an important question: Why are there still racial tensions in the United States today?

There are plenty of reasons for racial tensions. Senior Chris Cumberbatch said, "Not implicating this president or a past one, but identity politics and an 'us versus them' mentality have been on the rise and the driving forces."

Identity politics means that a person sees a politician of the same race and decides to vote for that person. This would create more separation of races during an election.

In 2008, the US elected its first African-American president with the appointment of Barack Obama, but the election did not fix race relations. Events such as the killing of Trayvon Martin and the "Black Lives Matter" protests in Baltimore are believed to hinder the advancement of the end of the racial divide.

According to the Pew Research Center, 65 percent of people believe it is more common to share racially insensitive beliefs than ever before. This means that people are more likely to act with prejudice toward a different race than their own, and the government has a difficult task to stop this due to the Freedom of Speech.

The one thing that the government can not change is the mentality of people. Despite a century of time, there are still racial tensions in the US. As long as people are set in their ways and refuse to see all people as equal, the United States will always have a problem with race relations.



## WEALTH GAP PLAGUES AMERICA

by John Mendelin

Both present-day and the 1920s in America are characterized by vast wealth disparity and intense class struggles, creating a situation where another parallel between these two time periods is worth further examination. It begs the question: in what ways are the same economic struggles still plaguing this society after a century?

According to BBC historians, “[In the 1920s,] wealth was very unequally divided in America. A third of all income was earned by just five percent of people.” This kind of disparity created incredible division between social classes with the wealthiest living lives of insulting extravagance, leaving 12 million Americans below the poverty line. “Hardest hit were immigrants and black Americans,” said BBC.

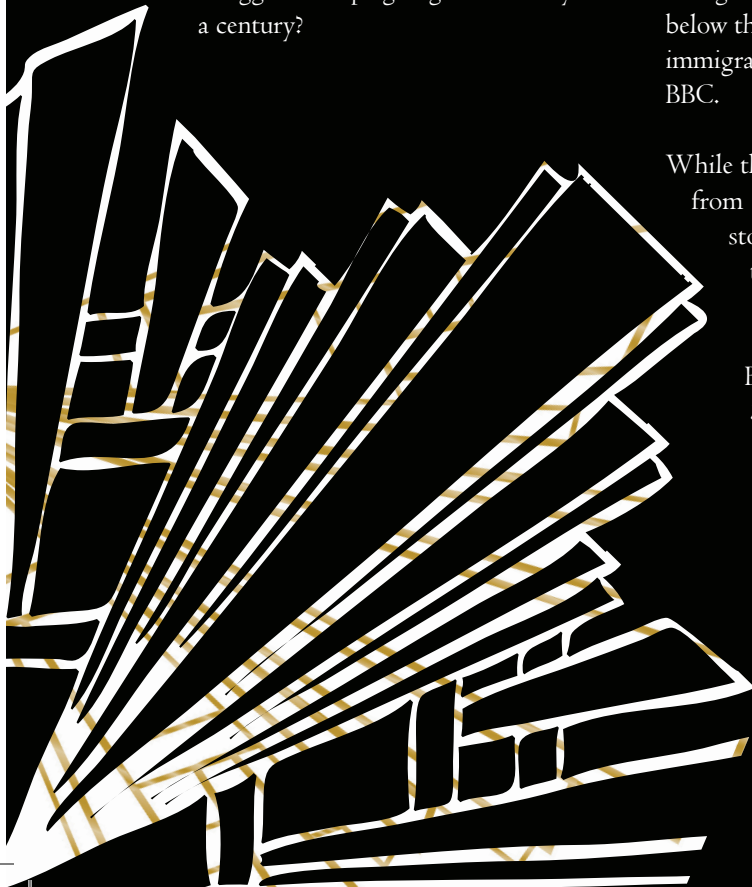
While that reality feels archaic, reporting from Inequality.org tells a different story. Their recent data states that the richest five percent of Americans now instead own two-thirds of all wealth, and the US Census Bureau’s report from 2017 shows 39.7 million Americans below the poverty line. Visually, it is difficult to ignore glaring statistics showing that, economically, this society never left the 1920s.

The same is true of the historically disenfranchised. According to historians for the Washington Post as of June 2019, “The typical black

family has just one tenth the wealth of the typical white one.” And with the recent attacks on the status of immigrants in the United States as well, it is clear that there is no rest for the hardest hit communities.

“Old industries were in decline,” said the same BBC historians regarding the 1920s American economy, and this statement has again found itself commonplace in dialogue surrounding 21st century crises. Currently, the United States is facing a dramatic decline in its manufacturing industries that saw so much success in the 20th century. This problem has created fear, as working class Americans are worried about their careers and how their futures look in a transitioning economy.

As books such as “The Great Gatsby” and photos from the 1920s displayed, the roaring 20s were a life of partying and lavish but only for the few who could afford it. To this day, there is still a huge gap between the top percentage of wealthy Americans and the millions below the poverty line.



## ARE AMERICANS TOO OVERINDULGED?

by Caitlin Crome

The desire for the next best thing has become second nature for most in today's society. If one were to look back at what life was like a century ago, surprisingly, not much has changed.

From lavish parties of the roaring 20s to now having the need for all things materialistic, Americans still feel the urge to have the nicest clothes and the newest cars. Society has developed into a culture where overindulgence is the norm.

Overindulgence can relate back to a century ago, also known as the roaring 20s. A decade known for economic growth and the loosening of social codes, this was the time of overindulgence. New styles of dancing and dressing were introduced which caused a very elaborate lifestyle. Constant partying and purchasing expensive items were among everyday behaviors.

Overindulgence can be seen as a positive or a negative aspect of both time periods. The ability to access things such as high-quality technology for learning and communication is convenient. But, as most would agree, too much of a good thing can be dangerous.

The idea of overindulgence can also be seen as the need for overstimulation. Generation Z has always been on the move. People are doing multiple extracurriculars

and jobs on top of hours of school work they get assigned every night. Students then feel they should be busy because that is all they are used to. Additionally, the constant use of phones and internet leaves many in the modern era stimulated continuously.

Staff have seen a recent increase in the overuse of phones for non-learning purposes in the classroom. Because of this, a new phone rule has been put in place. This new rule forces students to "park" their phones in hope for better focus on classwork.

As most teachers are enforcing this rule, many students have seen a benefit in decreasing distractions and overstimulation. "I think parking my phone has helped me learn in certain instances," said senior Andrew Doyle.

Along with the cell phone restrictions, administration has put a stop to students vaping in school. The dangerous overindulging behavior of using vape products containing nicotine has swept the nation. So far, it has been directly related with 54 deaths, according to The New York Times. Because of these recent incidents, the age to buy any tobacco related products has been raised from 18 to 21.

"Most students get their devices from 18

year olds, but now many students don't know 21 year olds," added Doyle. "Which makes it overall harder to get nicotine."

As a society, people are aware of these overstimulation and overindulgent behaviors. Some tend to turn to bragging about these behaviors instead of looking to fix the problem.

Senior Nate Martell described this idea of bragging about overindulging as a way of "flexing." "This means they show off their cars, clothes, parties, and daily activities to an excess," he said. "There isn't necessarily a purpose to this "flexing," but some enjoy viewing it, and others become annoyed from seeing it.

An all too common competition-like mindset has developed amongst the current generation. Who can post on social media with the best outfit or the nicest car has become the main goal. This is encouraging the idea of overstimulation through extensive purchasing and posting on social media. Overall, making overindulgence still an ongoing issue.

So the question still stands, how much is too much? As a society we can choose to continue to let this part of history repeat itself or make changes to counter it.