As early as the age of 10, I can remember embracing one of those more or less rules of life through which we lend to view the world. It came via my sister who, during a dinner-time family argument, whispered earnestly, "don't trust anyone older than twelve". This seemed like good advice at the time, as most of the conflict around the place certainly came from those the other side of twelve.

However, as I passed into a boyish adolescence, this rule receded and was replaced, as much by a sort of sexual aesthetic as a vague support for the few feminists I knew: rule 2 — don't trust anyone who shaves under their arms! Adherence to this rule meant that I had to be wary of both my grandmother and mother and, indeed, my own sister, who was and remains a shaver.

While it was an advance on my first rule, it did tend to exclude a few too many people, so I was pleased when I could let it slip and take on my 3rd rule of life: "Treat warily those with no sense of humour". Unlike the earlier rules, this one was based on more experience than a general idea. Those people who weren't able at times to chuckle at the world or smile at their own follies seemed both a bit less human and a good deal more boring. Moreover, in their relentless seriousness, they were usually exceedingly egotistical.

And this brings me to ALR 104, and the choice of hot pink for the cover colour. Clearly, you're not a relentlessly serious magazine. Perhaps you were simply being opportunistic, though the merit in associating your magazine with the parliamentary shorts of a former Labor Premier escapes me, I prefer to think the colour was a folly of your artistic department. I mean to say, a leftwing magazine clad in hot pink. Now that is worth a chuckle.

Warren Blum,
Leichhardt, NSW.

Once upon a time ALR was a magazine full of boy's stuff, written by boys. In recent times it seems to have tried harder to present feminist points of view. The discussion on socialist feminism, for instance, was good — as were the features on women in unisons, feminists and their daughters, and so on. But over the last several issues ALR seems to have gone back to the bad old days. In ALR 104, for instance, not one of the feature articles was by a woman, and the roundtable on unions featured five male academics — and one woman. How about trying harder next time?

Carol Wilson,
Carlton, Vic.

We welcome your letters for our next issue. As a general rule, letters should be no longer than 300 words and, preferably, should be typewritten. ALR reserves the right to edit letters down to this length.

Authors' addresses and a contact phone number should be included, although, naturally, they will not be printed. The deadline for letters is four weeks prior to the month of publication.