

**Strike up the band ...** We're hearing that Palm Beach orchestra leader **Bob Hardwick** is about to put another presidential notch on his baton.

Gee. That sounds kinda dirty.

Actually, Hardwick will be playing at the inauguration of **Barack Obama** as the 44th president of the United States.

Hardwick will lead his orchestra in front of 7,000 people at the Illinois ball at the Renaissance Hotel.

We will pause here to think how long the lines at the bar will be ...

The Illinois ball is an important one, it being the president's home state — not counting Hawaii.

"This makes my seventh president and fifth inauguration," Hardwick said, "We played the inauguration of **Jimmy Carter**, both inaugurations of Ronald Reagan and the inauguration of **George H.W. Bush.**"

He also played at a private party for Richard Nixon and at a party in Vail, Colo., celebrating Jerry Ford's 80th birthday, 50th wedding anniversary and 50th year in politics.

"President Ford asked me if I could bring the band into the ballroom before anybody got in there and play a song so he could have one dance alone with his wife, Betty.

"I said, 'Of course, Mr. President, what would you like to hear?' and his request was *I'm in the Mood for Love*. They really loved each other deeply."

Awwww. Who said Republicans aren't romantic?