22   Creating Animations in PHOTO-PAINT

You have a *lot* more power than you might expect once you begin investigating all the effects, the exquisitely cobbled brushes, the modes for compositing objects—and the capability to make *animations*. This chapter takes you through two examples of animations you can create if you have multiple drawings in CorelDRAW as the subject matter, and a clip of video from which you can pull frames. Although PHOTO-PAINT is perfectly capable of importing AVI files, I'd recommend that you take a whole three minutes and download and install a third-party utility that snags and saves frames from a video. The utility is free, and it is the simplest way I've ever seen to get stock for an animated GIF from movie stills. The URL can be found a little later in this chapter.

This is a fun and ambitious chapter, so let's start with an ambitious venture, but one that's not overwhelming and involves using CorelDRAW—remember that program from earlier chapters?

Creating an Animated GIF

GIFs had a waning popularity on the Web only a few years ago, giving way to Flash files. However, due to the relative insecurity of Flash videos (they can be hacked to make an exploit booby-trap), the MPEG-4 format has become the standard for high-resolution videos with sound. You see MPEG-4 videos all the time on YouTube and other websites with breaking news stories, and they are also used as tutorial files for specific software.

The good news is that there has been a resurgence of GIF animations, which are by their nature short in length and therefore very pointed in their message. Today you can see banners and movies that are only 15 frames in length, and they serve as almost a totally new visual communication device because of software such as PHOTO-PAINT.

An additional marvelous thing about animated GIFs is that they can play on any device without a special codec or plug-in. GIFs are native to HTML code, and they play on any web device. In contrast, it's estimated in 2016 that about half the web audience is using mobile devices, and Flash media will not play on handheld Internet devices. This is motivation enough to play with PHOTO-PAINT, the program that comes free in the Corel

Graphics Suite. You owe it to yourself to perform some creative messing around with it!

The following sections take you through some CorelDRAW and PHOTO-PAINT moves for creating a sample animation.

## Playing with a Paper Airplane

When you design an animation, you follow a checklist—the same as you do when gathering resources for any composition. The example in this section is a paper airplane, which has already been drawn for you as a CDR file. Let's pretend that a travel agent wants you to put a web banner on their site advertising the fact that children under 12 fly free this month only (or some similar offer). The concept is to fly a paper airplane across a sky, with a tag attached that spells out the offer.

The sky photo has been provided for you in the ZIP archive for this chapter, but the paper airplane CorelDRAW illustration is blank—it needs something written on the tag— so it's off to CorelDRAW to begin the next tutorial. The tag is intentionally blank: feel free to work with the file, take it apart and learn from it, and use it as part of your own composition with a different slogan written on it. Let's begin!

# Adding Text and Exporting a CorelDRAW Drawing

Tutorial

1. Open Paper Airplane.cdr in CorelDRAW and then zoom into the tag area.
2. With the Text tool, type **Kids Fly Free** (or whatever you like) over the tag area. You can put a line break after "Kids" to avoid running over the tag's hole in this area.
3. With the text selected with the Pick tool, choose a contrasting color for the text, such as bright yellow, by clicking the color well on the color palette.
4. On the Property Bar, choose a light-hearted typeface such as Comic Sans MS, bold. Scale the text up or down so it nearly fits inside the tag area.
5. Choose the Envelope tool from the effects group of tools on the Toolbox, and then distort the text a little, as shown in Figure 22-1. The drawing is at an angle to an imaginary camera, so the text shouldn't be perfectly parallel to the screen.
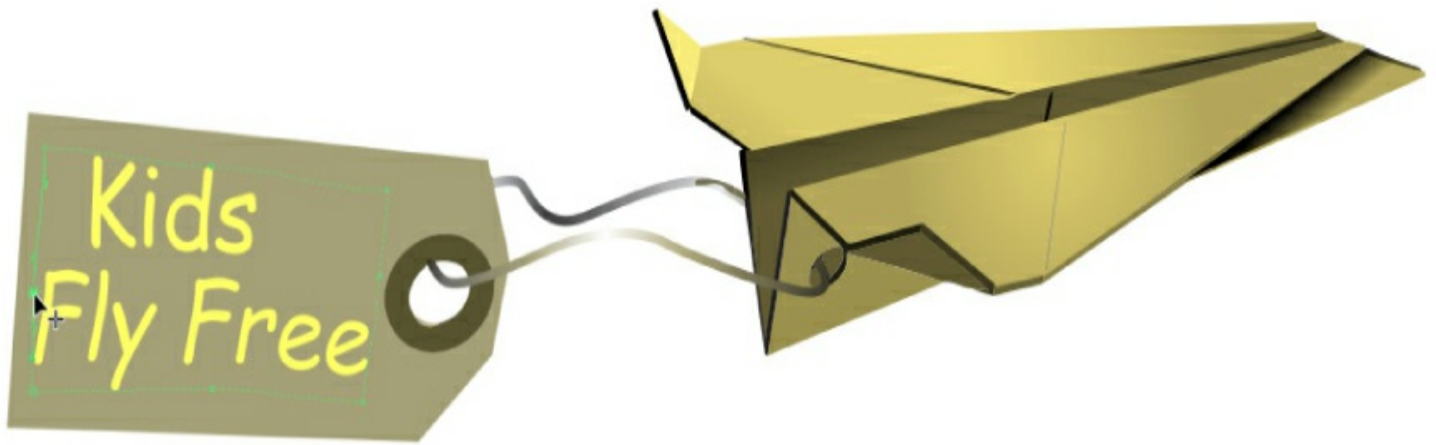
FIGURE 22-1 **Don't export with the text you've added looking too perfect.**

6. Select all the objects and then click the Export button on the Standard Bar. In the Export dialog, choose PNG-Portable Network Graphics (*.PNG) from the Save As Type drop-down list. Make **Paper Airplane.png** the name for the file, choose a hard drive location for the bitmap file, and then click Export.

7. In the Export dialog, make sure the export resolution is 96 dpi; otherwise, the airplane will be far too large for the GIF animation (see the following Note). Check the Transparency box if it's not already checked. Finally, look to see if the export file width is 513 pixels—choose Pixels as the Transformation | Units setting if it's not already. Click OK to export, and after CorelDRAW makes a bitmap copy of the illustration, you're finished and can close CorelDRAW and launch PHOTO-PAINT.
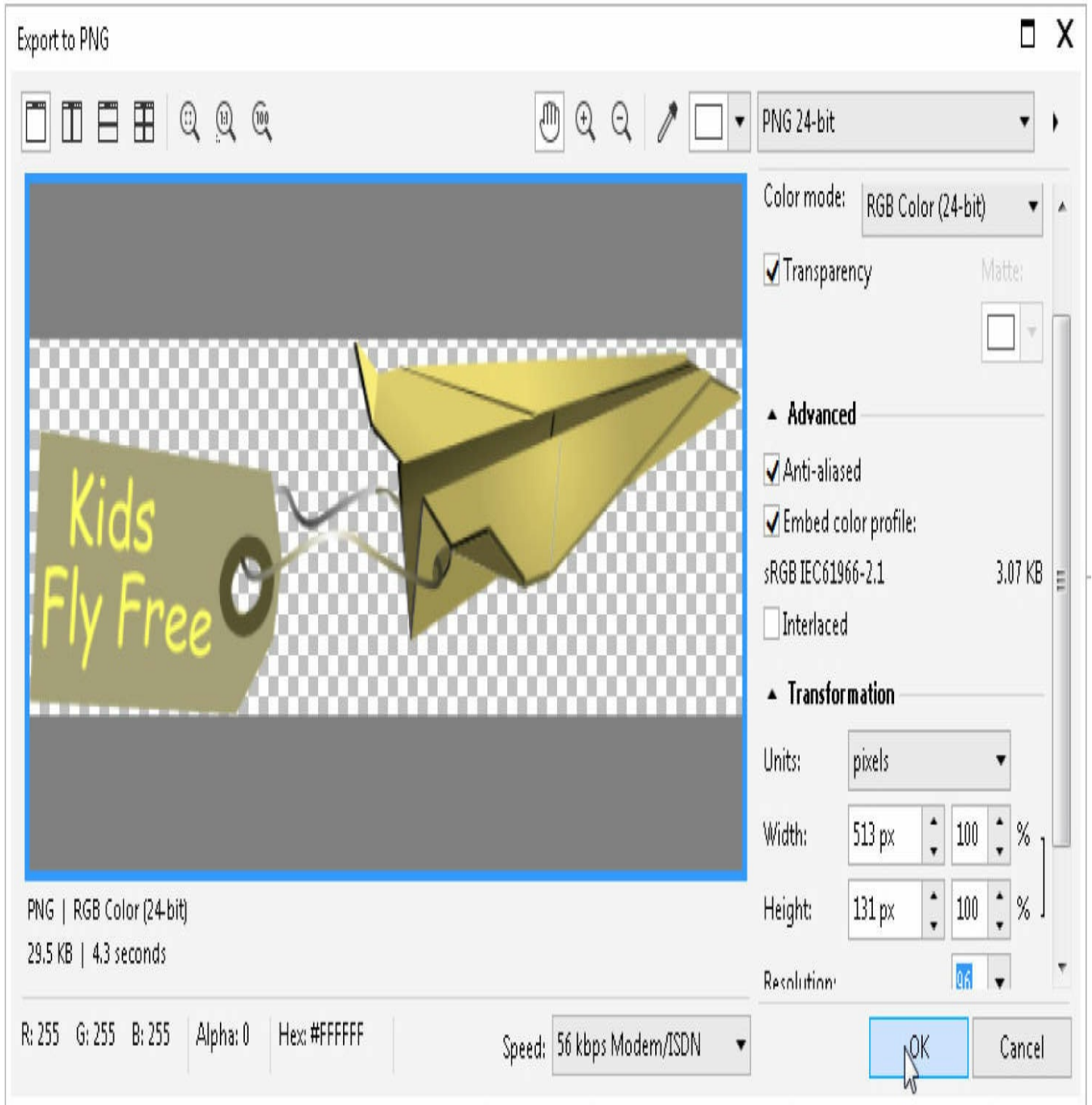
Note You didn't have to set a lot of options in the Export dialog because the CorelDRAW file was carefully set up and the airplane scaled to a predetermined size that made the tutorial work easily. When exporting drawings to be used as bitmap versions in PHOTO-PAINT, you begin your drawing with a new file in CorelDRAW whose resolution is 96 dpi, the same as your screen and the same resolution as graphics

you see in your internet browser. In the Create a New Document dialog, type **96** in the Rendering Resolution field and you're good to go. Then you set the units in CorelDRAW to pixels by choosing from the Units drop-down on the Property Bar. Keep in mind that GIF animations have to be small in dimension. For example, the airplane is about 500 pixels wide because the composition you'll make is about that width. When you draw a foreground object, you keep it to the width you want it to be, measured in pixels, for your final composition. Then, exporting the drawing to the correct pixel width and height is a simple and nearly automatic process. Measuring is a pain, so when you set up your document for web export, it's a pain you only have to endure once when you begin a new drawing.

Animation: Defining Frames and Basic Setup

You'll move procedurally, which means "not at breakneck speed," through the next sections; you need to build each frame of a GIF animation one at a time—PHOTO-PAINT doesn't perform "tweening" to auto-create intermediate animation frames. First on your to-do list is to import the Background image, Sky.png, and then turn the document into a movie by adding frames with the same sky background. Then you'll place and copy the paper airplane file so you can progress with an animation: you flatten each frame when the airplane is in a certain position, and then change its position in each frame. You're going to create an animation of the airplane traveling from left to right, thus creating an *animation cycle* that will play indefinitely on a web page. You'll create six frames of animation as the airplane travels from camera left to an exit at camera right, and it will pause in the middle of the frame so audiences can clearly read the text.
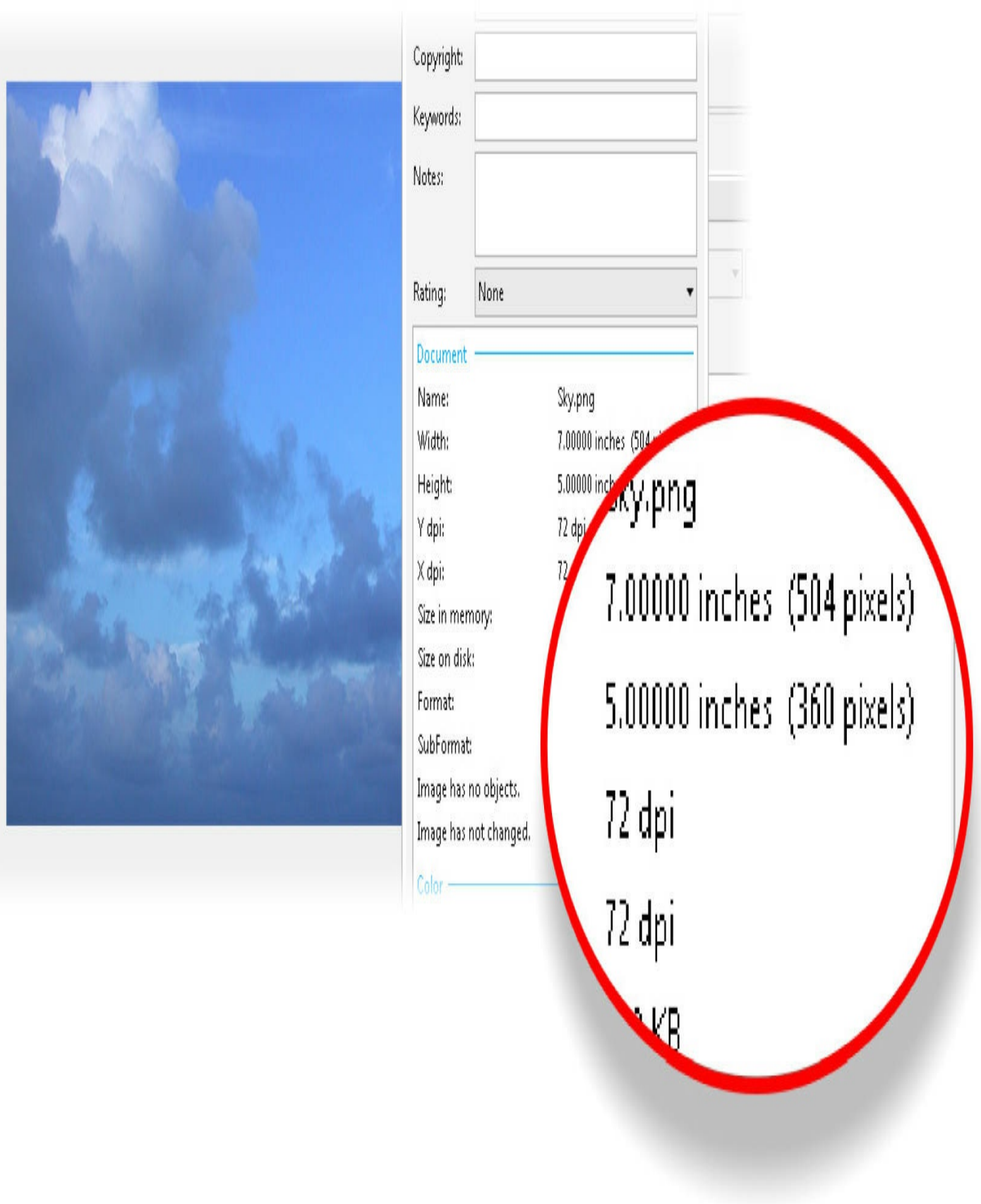
Let's get moving!

Building a GIF Animation: Part 1

Tutorial

1. In PHOTO-PAINT, press CTRL-O and then choose Sky.jpg from your hard drive.
2. You need to measure the background so the movie file you create is the same size. This is a mock assignment, and a web banner would certainly be much smaller in dimensions, but you can do that on your own later. Right-click over the image, choose Document Properties from the context menu, and as you can see in the illustration, the sky image measures 504 pixels wide by 360 pixels tall. You can close the box, remember those dimensions, and then close the Sky.png image. As mentioned in Chapter 21, if you measure pictures in pixels, you can ignore the resolution (for example, 96 pixels per inch). Pixels are not an absolute size, but they *are* an absolute

value.

3. Choose File | New. In the Create a New Image box, choose 504 by 360 @ 72 dpi, because this is exactly the dimensions of the Sky.png image. The airplane drawing you exported to PNG scales perfectly to the background. Number of Frames should be set to 2, even though this is a six-frame animation. There's a neat trick you can do to add frames after the first two have had the sky image placed into the frame.

Copyright:

Keywords:

Notes:

Rating: None ▼

Document

Name: Sky.png

Width: 7.00000 inches (504 ...

Height: 5.00000 inc...

Y dpi: 72 dpi

X dpi: 72

Size in memory:

Size on disk:

Format:

SubFormat:

Image has no objects.

Image has not changed.

Color

ky.png

7.00000 inches (504 pixels)

5.00000 inches (360 pixels)

72 dpi

72 dpi

KB

4. Choose Window | Dockers | Movie to display the docker you'll need to create the necessary frames. Also open Windows | Dockers | Object Manager. This docker is necessary for placing objects and merging them with the background sky image to

complete a frame. Note that the frames on the Movie docker list are set to a 200-millisecond duration. Duration can be changed, and you'll do so a little later; a millisecond is a tenth of a second, about the duration of a 16th note in music (at an average tempo of 60 beats per minute). This is also evaluated as the minimum time it takes for a human to recognize a picture.

5. To populate six frames with the background clouds, click the first frame on the Movie docker. Then click the Insert from File button at the bottom of the docker (see the following illustration), and a dialog appears where you can choose the Sky.png image as long as the path to the file is correct. From there, a final dialog pops up asking you whether the picture should go after or before the currently selected frame. After is fine, so click OK to apply the command.

6. Keep doing this until you have six frames with a background of the sky. If there are extra blank frames, click the frame to select it, and then press the trash icon on the bottom right of the Movie docker.
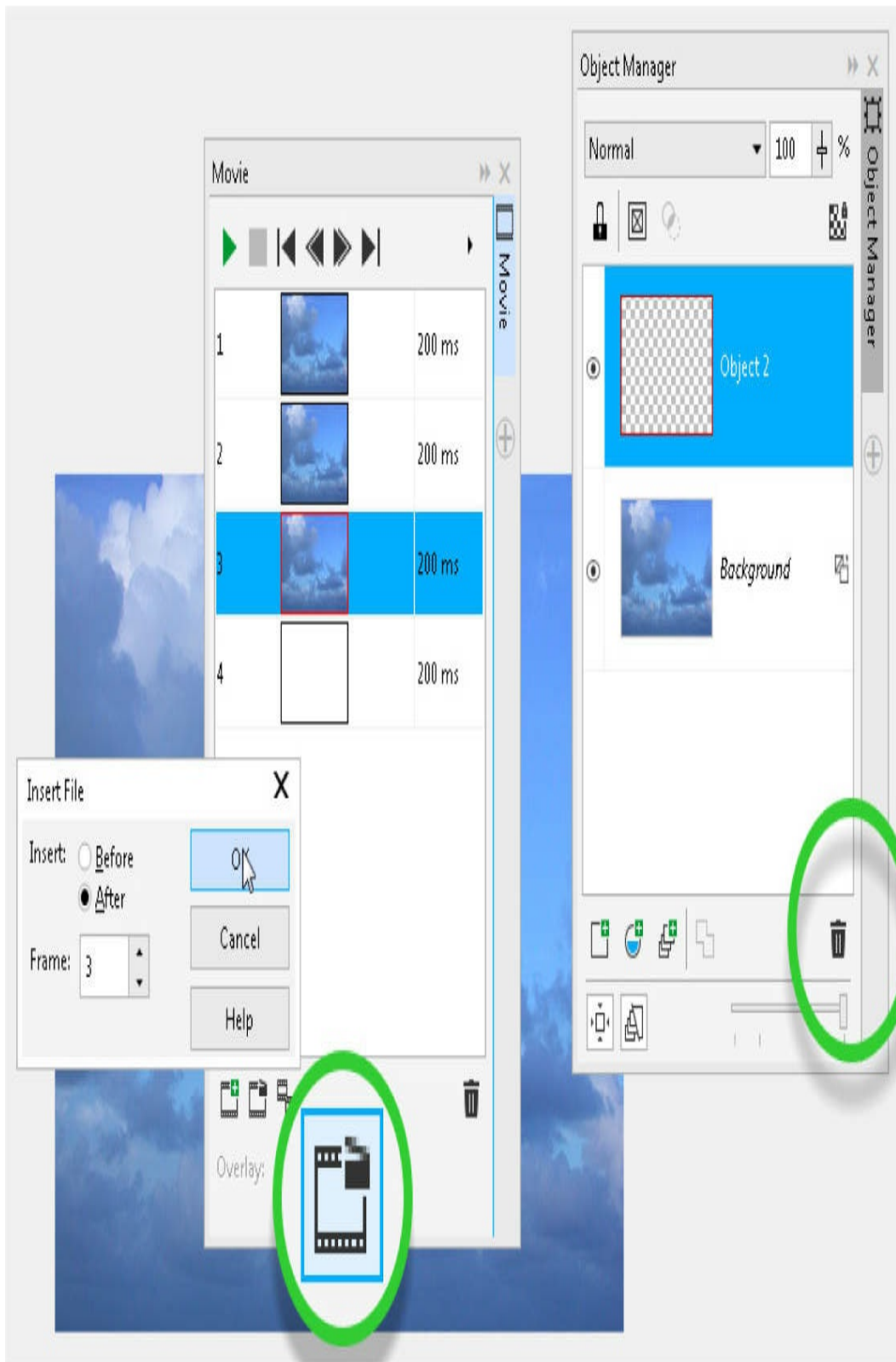
Insert From File button
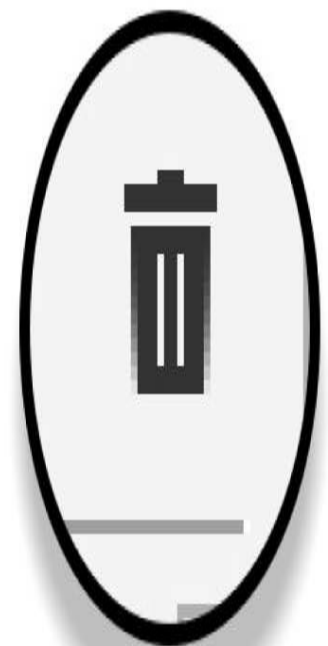
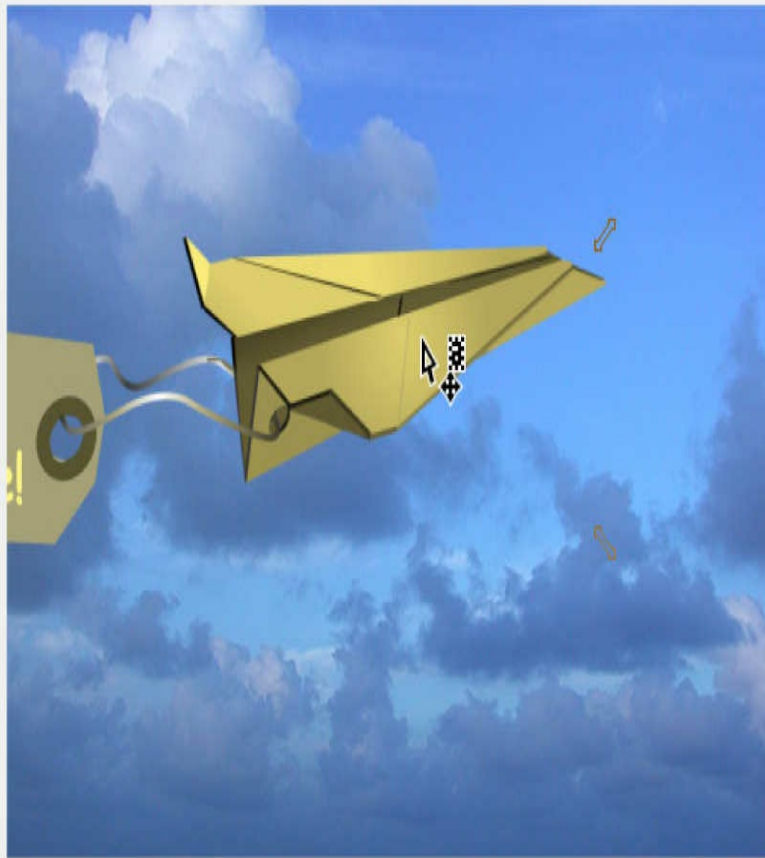Delete blank frames once you have six background frames.

7. With the first frame chosen on the Movie docker, double-click it, and it'll take on a red outline to indicate it's active. Now you can import Paper Airplane.png. Because you

exported this PNG file with transparency, it's now an object with a transparent background, and is easy to animate against the sky image. Let's strategize for a moment: you should position the airplane so that only its nose sticks out of the left of the frame. Why? Because the last frame will have it departing at the right of the animation. This way, you'll have a looping animation.

8. Just click without moving the mouse, and the paper airplane illustration should appear, sized correctly because you measured both the plane and the sky photo earlier. Copy this airplane as long it is an object in the composition; you'll need it for successive frames, and copying it is easier than importing it time and again.

9. Go to the next frame by double-clicking its thumbnail of the Movie docker. Choose Edit | Paste | Paste as a New Object, and you have a brand-new copy of the airplane you can move.

0. Move it to the position you need, and then right-click and choose Combine | Combine Objects With Background. See the following illustration.

Align and Distribute   Ctrl+Shift+A

Combine   ▸

Select All Objects

Combine Objects With Background

Combine All Objects With Background

Object Manager   »

Normal   ▼   100   ┽   %

🔒 | ⊠ 🕭 ○;   ▦

⦿   Object 16

⦿   *Background*   🗗
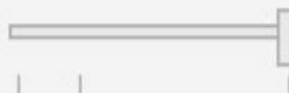
Right-click over a thumbnail.

Tip If you want precision in the airplane's progress from left to right, choose to display rulers (see the following illustration) and then drag vertical guides to create vertical intervals for the lane movement.

Show rulers (Ctrl+Shift+R)
Show or hide the rulers.
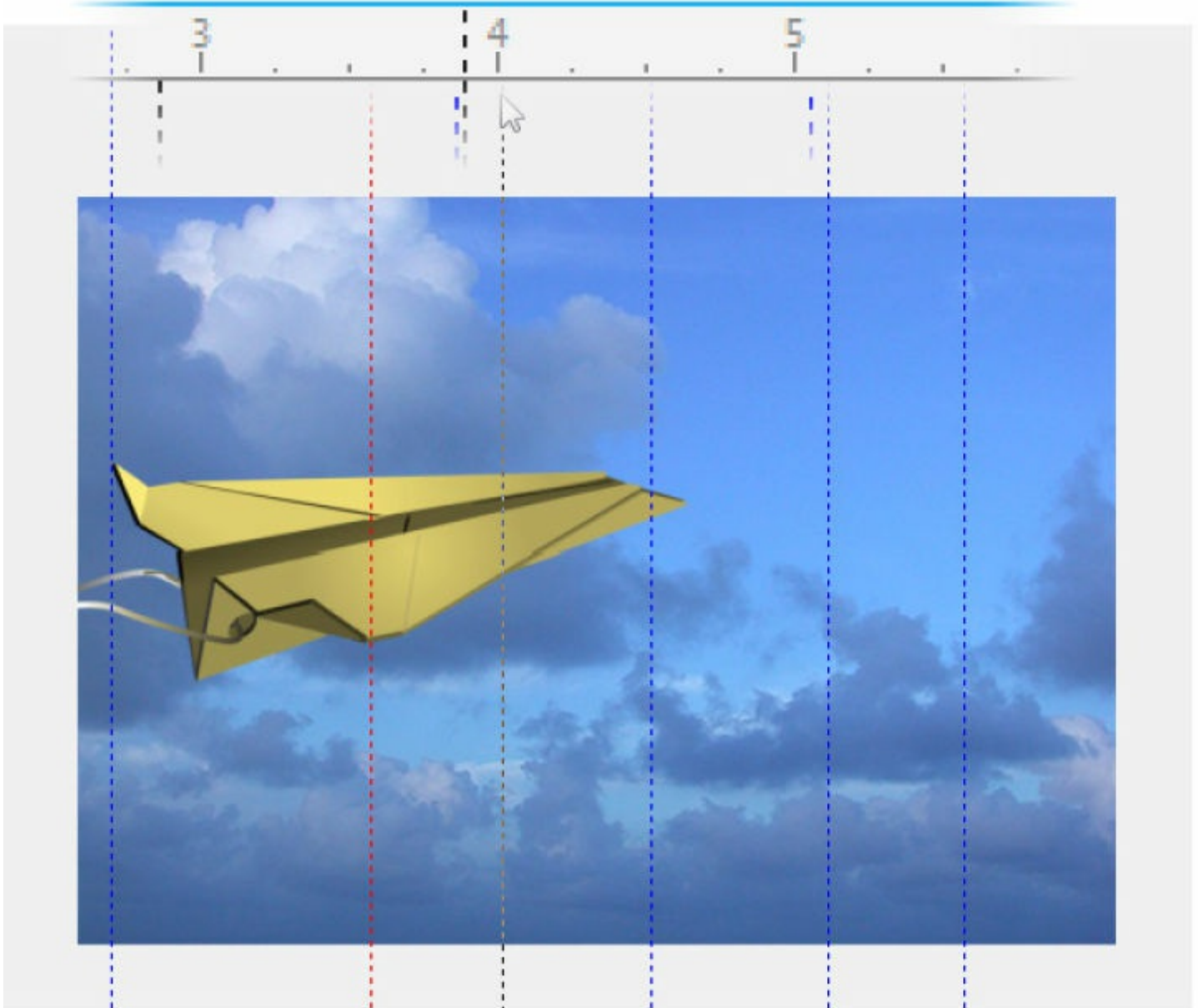
1. You can use the Overlay feature rather than guides to see how the airplane progresses

from left to right. SHIFT-click the two frames you want to compare (it's okay to choose a frame that's not flattened), move the Overlay slider to 100% in this example, and then move the airplane object to your liking. Finally, use the Combine right-click menu option to flatten the frame after you're happy with its position. See Figure 22-2.

Frame 2　　　　　　　　　　Frame 3

Activate/deactivate Overlay
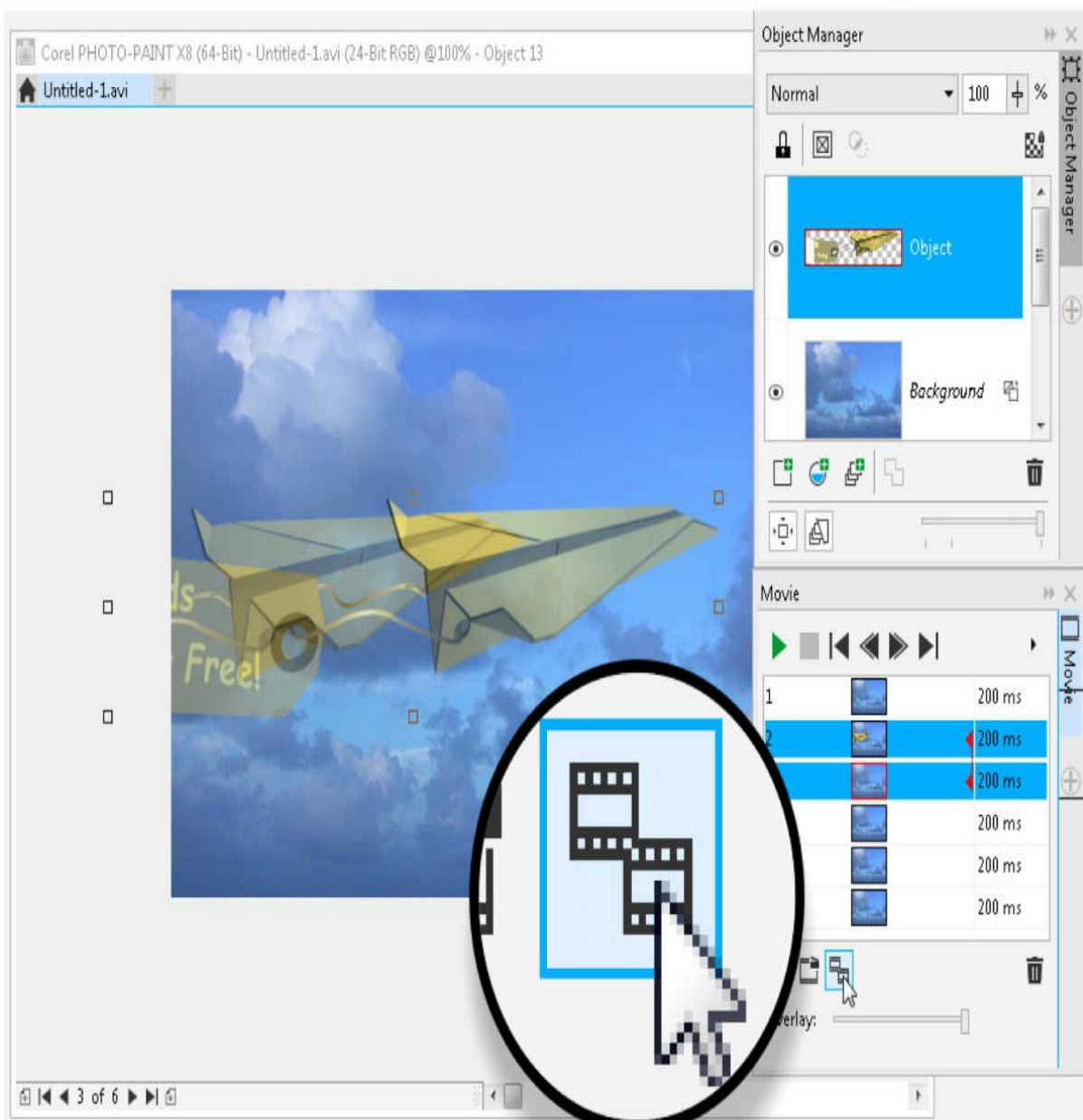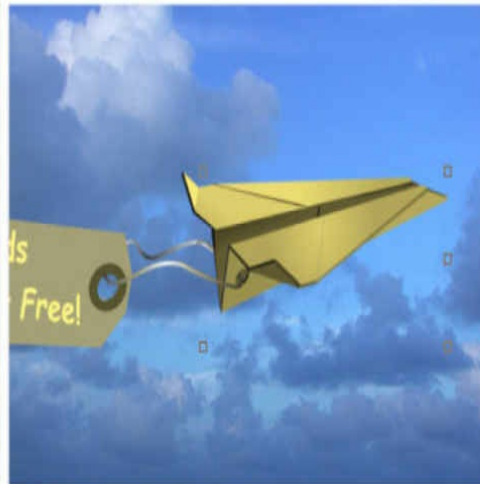
SHIFT-click to
select frames
to compare.

FIGURE 22-2   **An entertaining animation keeps movement predictable between frames.**

2. Finish filling all six frames. Frame 3 or 4 should probably be the complete airplane view with the tag message. Later, you'll learn how to extend the display time of this frame to drive the deal home with the viewer and potential client.

3. Frame 6 is of importance, too. You want all of the tag to the left of the plane to be out of frame on the left. Why? Because when this animation loops. If you followed the directions earlier, the tip of the nose of the plane is in view. So to loop the animation, the last frame needs the airplane to be mostly if not all out of sight.

4. Do *not* save your work, because for reasons unknown, PHOTO-PAINT will insist on saving any work in progress as an AVI, PSD, or GIF file, and you are not ready to finish the file to any of these file formats. Just hang in there; the hard work is done.

Just for fun, you can check the accuracy of your work. The Movie docker has controls like you'd find on a TV remote. You can play, stop, and go to the first and/or last frame. Press the Stop button when you're finished entertaining yourself and get ready to export your work.

Tip   Instead of using the Next Frame and Previous Frame buttons on the Movie docker, you can double-click the frame title (or the thumbnail) to go to a specific frame.

Building a GIF Animation: Part 2

Tutorial

1. Now that the frames all have content in them and there are no objects in the composition (but only backgrounds), go to the frame where the plane and message are centered with the text easy to read, probably frame 3 or 4. Double-click that thumbnail frame on the Movie docker and you're all set to make a different display time for that frame's default of 200 ms.

2. Click the "200 ms" title for this frame to select it for editing and then type in **800**. Press ENTER, and PHOTO-PAINT automatically tags "ms" at the end and you're all set. Four-fifths of a second is plenty of time for the audience to see the message. Also, this GIF will continuously loop (coming up next), adding more time for the sales pitch

sandwiched in between the light entertainment. See the following illustration.
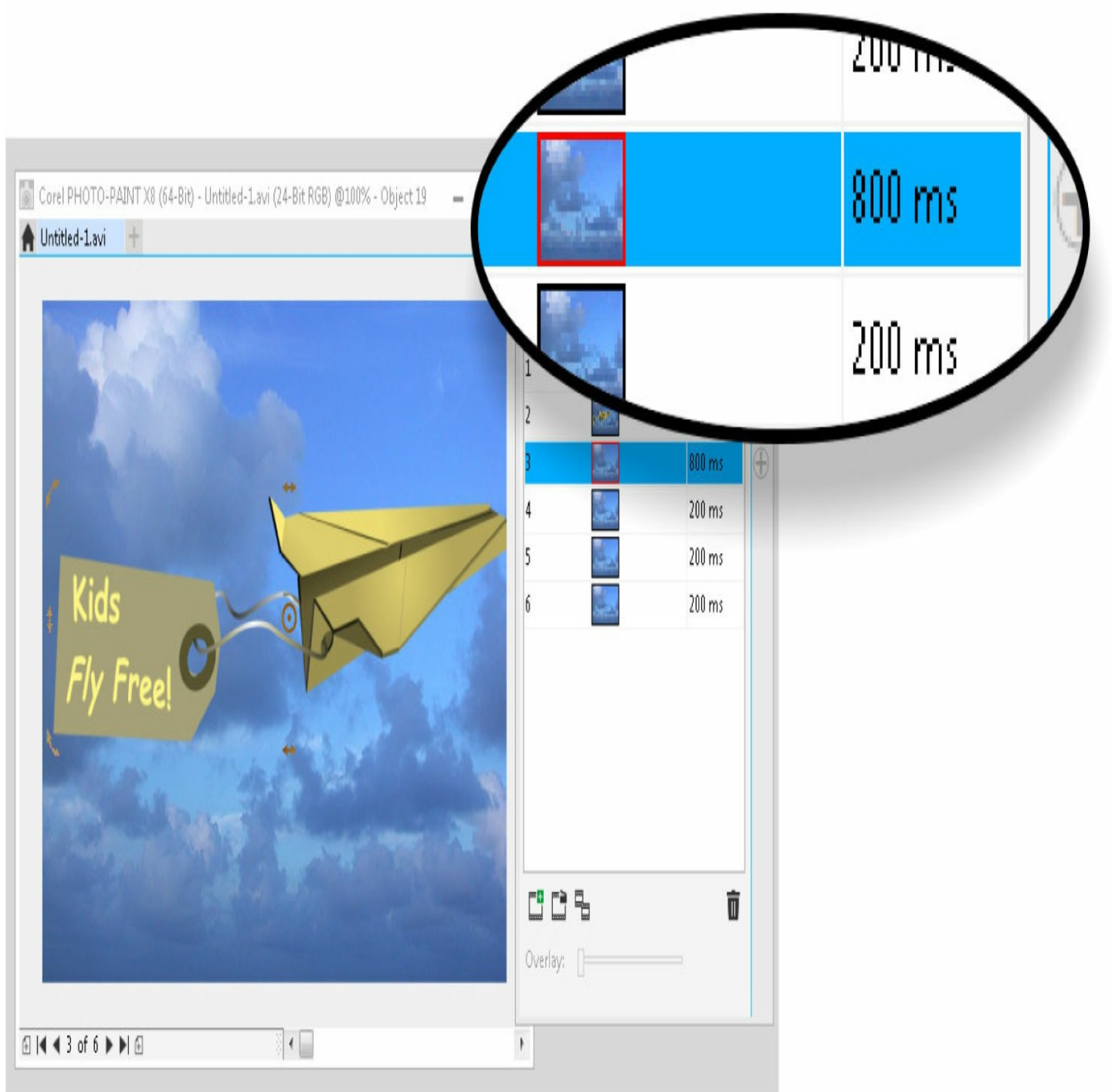
Finishing the Animation

The following steps take you through timing; as mentioned earlier, the frame where you get a good view of the message you typed on the tag needs to be a longer dura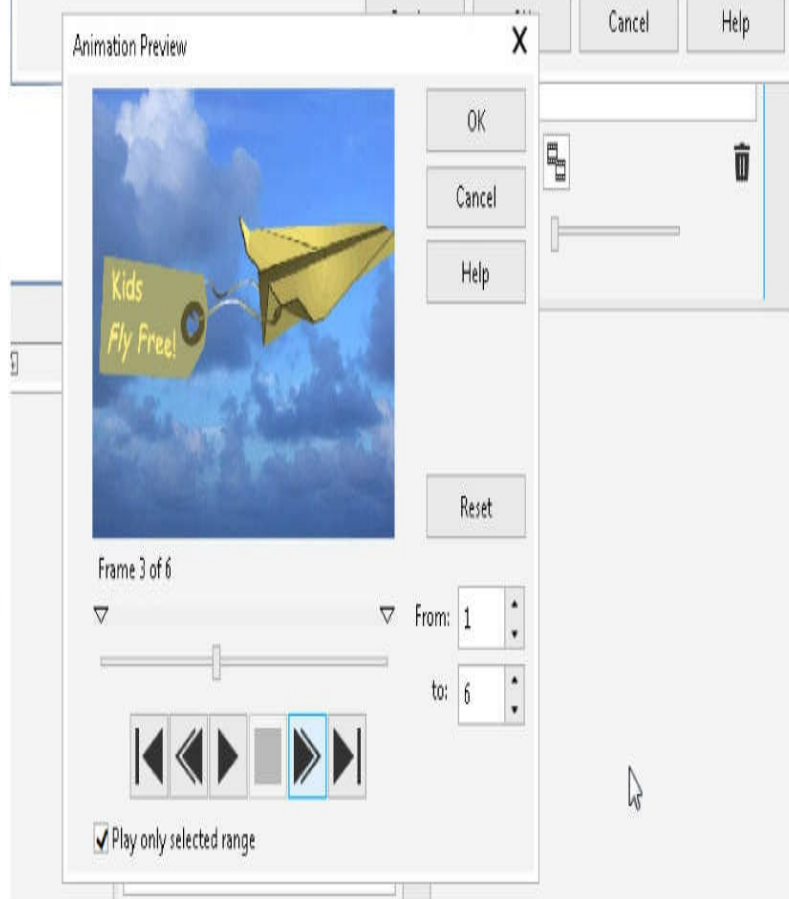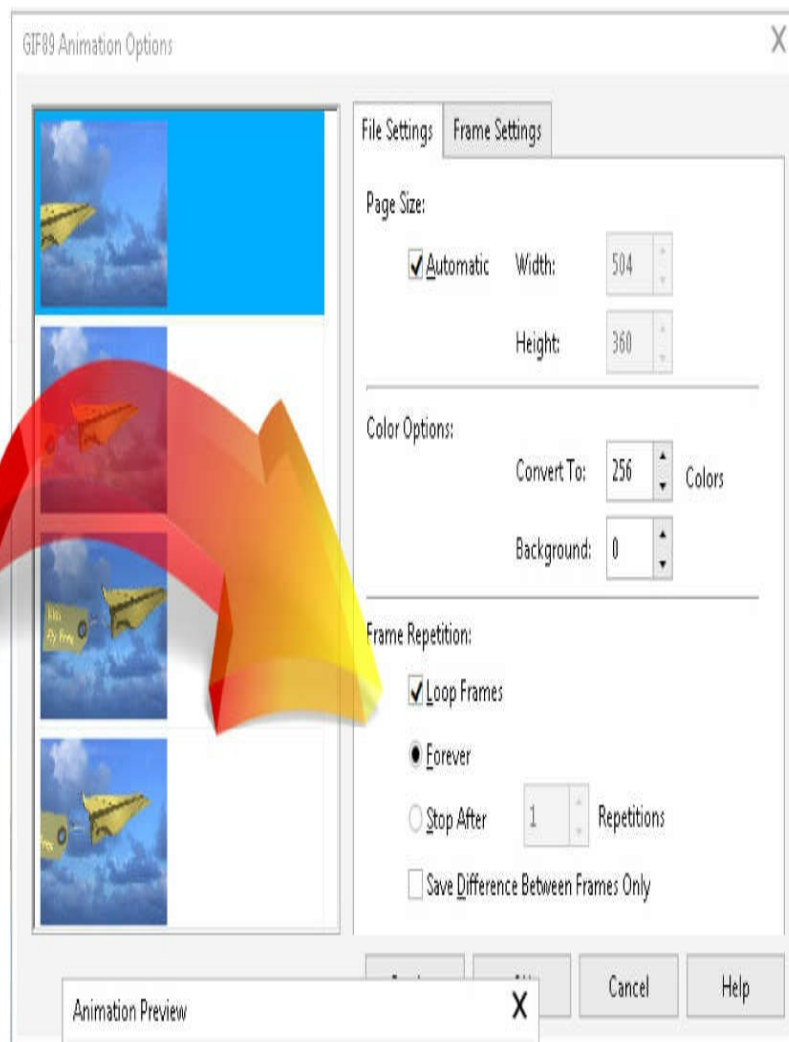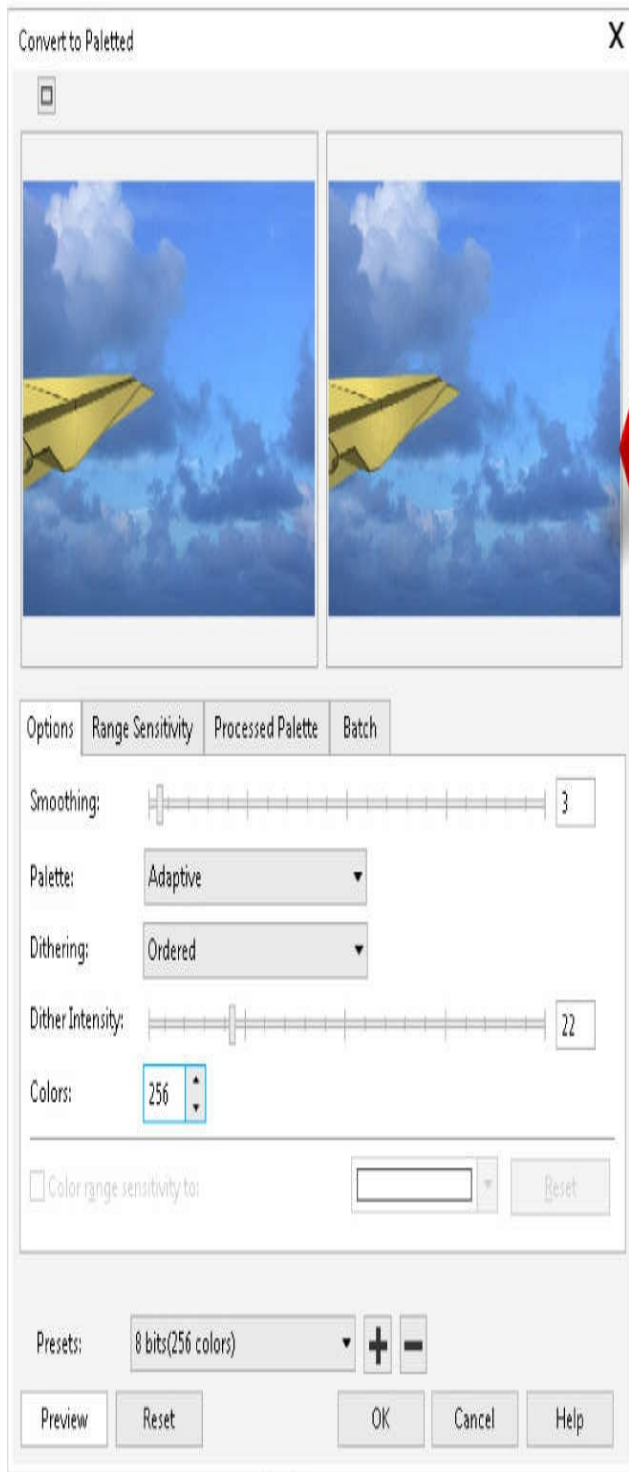tion. Follow these steps to put the finishing touches on the animation, and then you'll see how to export it to GIF file format.

Exporting an Animation

Tutorial

1. Choose File | Save As, and choose GIF - GIF Animation (*.gif) as the file format you want from the Save As type drop-down list. Choose a file location, give the file an appropriate name, and then click OK to enter a couple more dialogs where you specify color depth and the means by which certain colors are averaged to produce a relatively small file size.

2. In the Convert to Paletted dialog, you set the type of dithering and color palette used in your animation frames. You'll see that if you type 256 in the Colors box, many options are dimmed. This is because if you export an image at the maximum color range of the GIF file format, which is 256, the other options for dithering and the color palette used are a moot point. You can't enhance something at its maximum quality, so to speak. GIFs have a maximum of 256 unique colors, and these palettes help preserve the delicate shading of the cloud photo and some of the fountain fills used in the CorelDRAW airplane drawing.

3. Try out the Adaptive palette for this type of composition. Adaptive emphasizes the most frequently used colors and averages them a little while ignoring smaller, almost dismissible color pixels. Besides, one sure way of optimizing a palette to reduce colors is by previewing all of them. Choose one from the drop-down; if the preview looks like the floor on a subway, move to the next method.

4. Because any of these images has more than 256 unique colors, you'll want to use dithering as a method for keeping the excess areas from being moved to the closest but flat color area—which is pretty unattractive. Choose Adaptive as the Palette, and then choose Ordered from the Dithering drop-down. Ordered dithering is also called pattern dithering, and the result looks like a woven pattern, but only with images that have, say, 10,000 unique colors. Honestly, the other dithering options will increase the size of the saved file (although they can produce handsome, subtle changes), and the number of colors in the images is so close to 256 that ordered dithering will be virtually invisible. Click the OK button, and you're off to the GIF Animation Options dialog.

Convert to Paletted

| Options | Range Sensitivity | Processed Palette | Batch |

Smoothing: _____ 3

Palette: Adaptive ▼

Dithering: Ordered ▼

Dither Intensity: _____ 22

Colors: 256

☐ Color range sensitivity to: [ ] ▼ Reset

Presets: 8 bits(256 colors) ▼ ➕ ➖

[Preview] [Reset] [OK] [Cancel] [Help]

GIF89 Animation Options

| File Settings | Frame Settings |

Page Size:

☑ Automatic   Width: 504

Height: 360

Color Options:

Convert To: 256 Colors

Background: 0

Frame Repetition:

☑ Loop Frames

● Forever

○ Stop After 1 Repetitions

☐ Save Difference Between Frames Only

[Cancel] [Help]

Animation Preview

Kids Fly Free!

[OK]
[Cancel]
[Help]

[Reset]

Frame 3 of 6

From: 1
to: 6

☑ Play only selected range

5. Of paramount importance in this dialog is the Frame Repetition area. Put a check in the Loop Frames box, click the Forever button, and you've completed all the relevant options for this animation. Oh, you can preview the animation at a small size by first clicking Preview and then using the remote control buttons at the bottom of the Animation Preview box.

6. Stop! Be sure you read this step two or three times. Before you click OK and export the GIF to any location (I suggest your Desktop), your work in assembling this animation will all go away after you close PHOTO-PAINT. You can choose to keep the file open and keep PHOTO-PAINT open until you've perhaps done a second, better (or different) version of the paper airplane. You can save your work as a PDF file, which in theory you could crop frame by frame and repeat the process in this section of this chapter (hint: it's irritating, tedious work). You could save the animation as an AVI file, but opening the file to work with it typically results in missing frames and duplicate frames—it's a train wreck of an imported file with frames, but it's your best option for saving most of your work here.

7. Click OK, and then drag the GIF file into an internet browser window to watch it play!

Are you ready for the cutting-edge, totally trendy movie GIF animation now? Sure you are! Because you read the previous section, a lot of the steps will be a snap, crackle, and pop!

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The book comes either way you like it.

The

The

The

And

Gary

Kids
Fly Free!

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Movie Animations

Naturally, to create a movie animation, you need a movie clip. And you then need to pick key frames—frames of a definitive graphics event, such as one frame of a guy with his head in profile and the next frame of his head turned to the camera. Animated GIFs taken from video frames are all the rage and almost the standard for playing brief video clips on the Web. Everything from fashion to silly, surreal videos are found in e-zine articles and on banners. So turning a short video clip into a compelling, attractive GIF is our next stop in this chapter.

Limitations and Workarounds for GIF Movies

Let me be frank for a moment. Acquiring a video clip is not easy. For example, the tutorial video you'll use in this chapter is pretty poor, but serviceable. In fact, I did several things you should avoid. So, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Be close to your subject. Frame them so the action takes place where you want it. Also, if possible, use a tripod, because frame-to-frame jitter, especially with a 12-frame GIF file, spoils the presentation a little. My problem with the video Duchess.mp4 is that our Siamese stops being interesting if you get too close to her performing strange things, as you'll soon see.
- I used a digital zoom on my now ancient flip camera. Digital zooms on *any* camera suck, even the iPhone 6. You lose focus, and noise (similar to grain on analog cameras) is visible. You therefore need to find a predictable subject and use a tripod.
- Try to get good separation between the foreground subject and the background. Use good lighting so that you use the whole spectrum of brightness.
- If at all possible, try to get the first and last frame very similar in composition so the film loops in a natural and expected way. I was not so lucky with Duchess as my subject, but I have a workaround for a looping video that begins and ends in different places I'll share with you later.

Essentially, use the rules of good photography for good cinematography. What I did to this short MP4 file was to sharpen the edges, brighten certain areas, and then apply a toon filter using a video editor to trace the edges in the video, ever so slightly (8 percent), to bring out a little more foreground motion. Finally, I reduced the size of the video from the native 1290×720p to 720×480p to make the file smaller for you to download. Plus, it's a more suitable size for the internet.

You'll need to download and install a small, easy-to-use program off the Web, because PHOTO-PAINT will not import MPG4 videos. Also, it's not a fun task to browse through hundreds of stills to find exactly the one you want.

Go to http://paul.glagla.free.fr/imagegrab_en.htm and download the ImageGrab file. It's in a ZIP archive that includes a setup file. Once you answer a few questions about file location and whether you want it on your Start menu, you're almost all set to capture frames from the Duchess video.

Seriously consider donating a few bucks to Paul Glagla and his work. This is the most recent ImageGrab program, and it's dated six years ago (but works in Windows 10 and earlier). Help this fellow make more, better, and more frequent releases if you like the program. The file you're downloading is freeware and not for commercial use.

Let's begin at the beginning by picking out, say, 12 key frames to bring into PHOTO-PAINT.
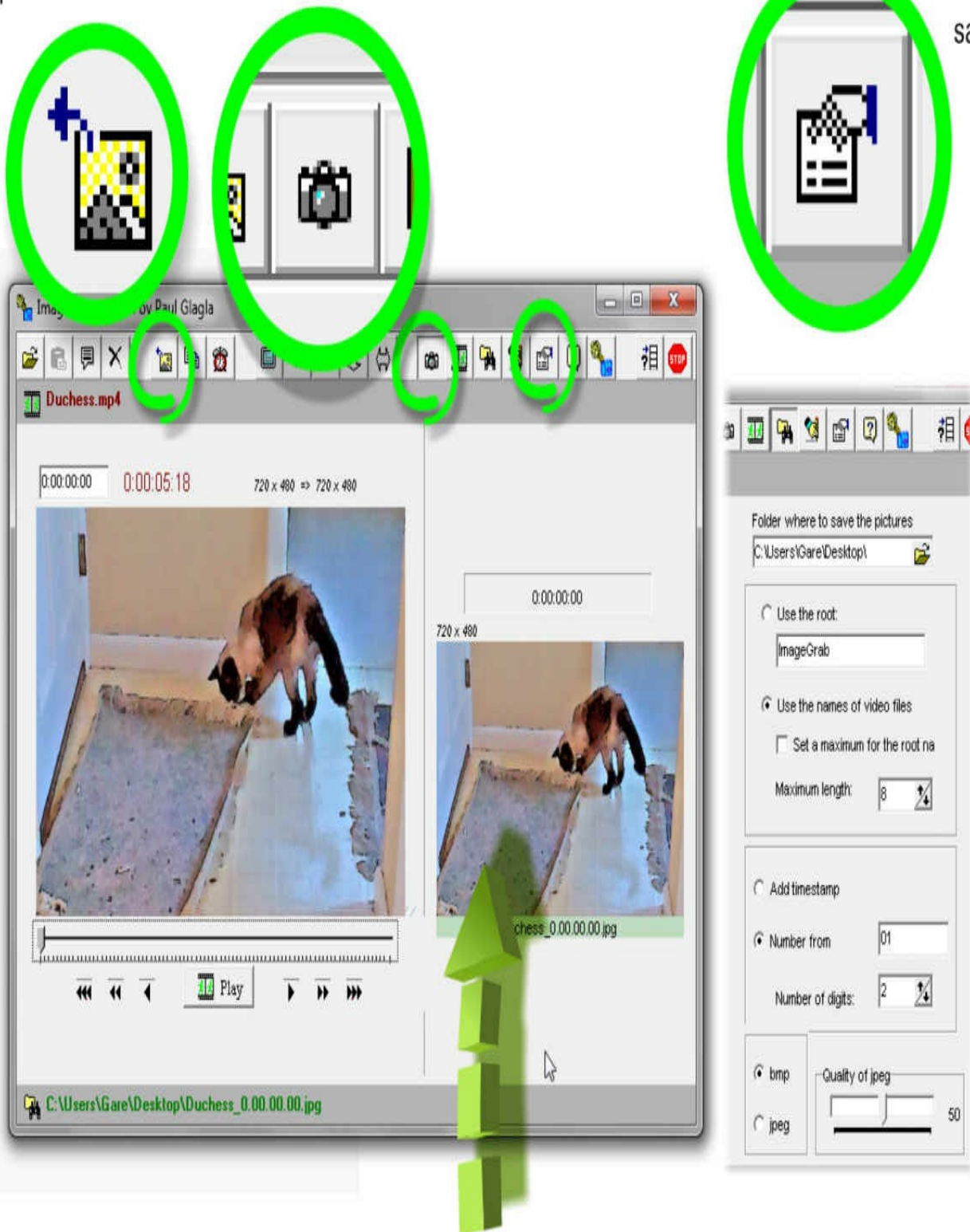
Capturing and Saving Video Frames

Tutorial

1. Open ImageGrab. You can actually drag and drop the Duchess.mp4 video into the main viewing window to load it. ImageGrab is fussy about file extensions and wants MPEG-4 as an extension, not MP4. Tough. Just drop it onto the video area. Alternatively, if you want to jump ahead to the compiling part (which you already did in the previous tutorial), you can use the Duchess stills I snagged in the ZIP file.

2. Look ahead to Figure 22-3. The first thing you need to do is click the Options button to set the location of saved files. I'm choosing my Desktop, as you can see here (because everything else in the world is on my Desktop), and I've typed 01 in the Number From entry box. This is because we're only snatching 12 frames, and I don't want to have to work with or renumber files named 000023.bmp, for example. Finally, choose BMP as the file format for saves instead of the lossy JPEG file format to ensure the video is as good as can be when it is compressed when it's exported from PHOTO-PAINT as a GIF.

Captures a frame from the video and saves it to the location you set in Options.

Captures a frame from the video but doesn't save it.

Settings. Choose the save location.

Duchess.mp4

0:00:00:00   0:00:05:18   720 x 480 ⇒ 720 x 480

0:00:00:00

720 x 480

chess_0.00.00.00.jpg

Play

C:\Users\Gare\Desktop\Duchess_0.00.00.00.jpg

Folder where to save the pictures

C:\Users\Gare\Desktop\

○ Use the root:

ImageGrab

● Use the names of video files

☐ Set a maximum for the root na

Maximum length: 8

○ Add timestamp

● Number from   01

Number of digits: 2

● bmp   Quality of jpeg

○ jpeg   50

The frame you just saved displays here.

3. You're good to go. Drag the timeline slider under the main preview window back and forth a little to force a preview image, and then drag it to frame 1. I think that's a good picture to begin the GIF animation with (and so do you!). Click the Grab The Current Video Frame To Picture button (without saving it). Generally, because you don't have the destination folder readily at hand, it's best to save a file to screen and then save it to file. This saves renumbering and the accidental overwriting of a file you like. Right-click over the small thumbnail the program just generated and choose Save to File (F7). If you look closely under the small thumbnail, the green area tells you what the file name will be.

4. Let me explain what this GIF will be so you can scout down the best keyframes. Duchess loves the small rug next to the door to the garage. In this clip I was lucky enough to capture, she goes under the rug and then reappears on the other side. So drag the slider forward a little until you find a good frame of Duchess beginning to go under the rug at about 12 o'clock in the frame. When you click the picture with the plus sign icon, the small preview thumbnail goes to the left of the main window and you've saved the photo.

5. Repeat this action at keyframes. I counted about 12 good ones, and there's a folder in the ZIP file for this chapter that you can use. Of particular interest is toward the end of the video where she looks at me and then looks away. It's a nice touch for the end of a silly film clip.

6. You can exit ImageGrab without saving settings or anything. Go locate your stills and start PHOTO-PAINT.
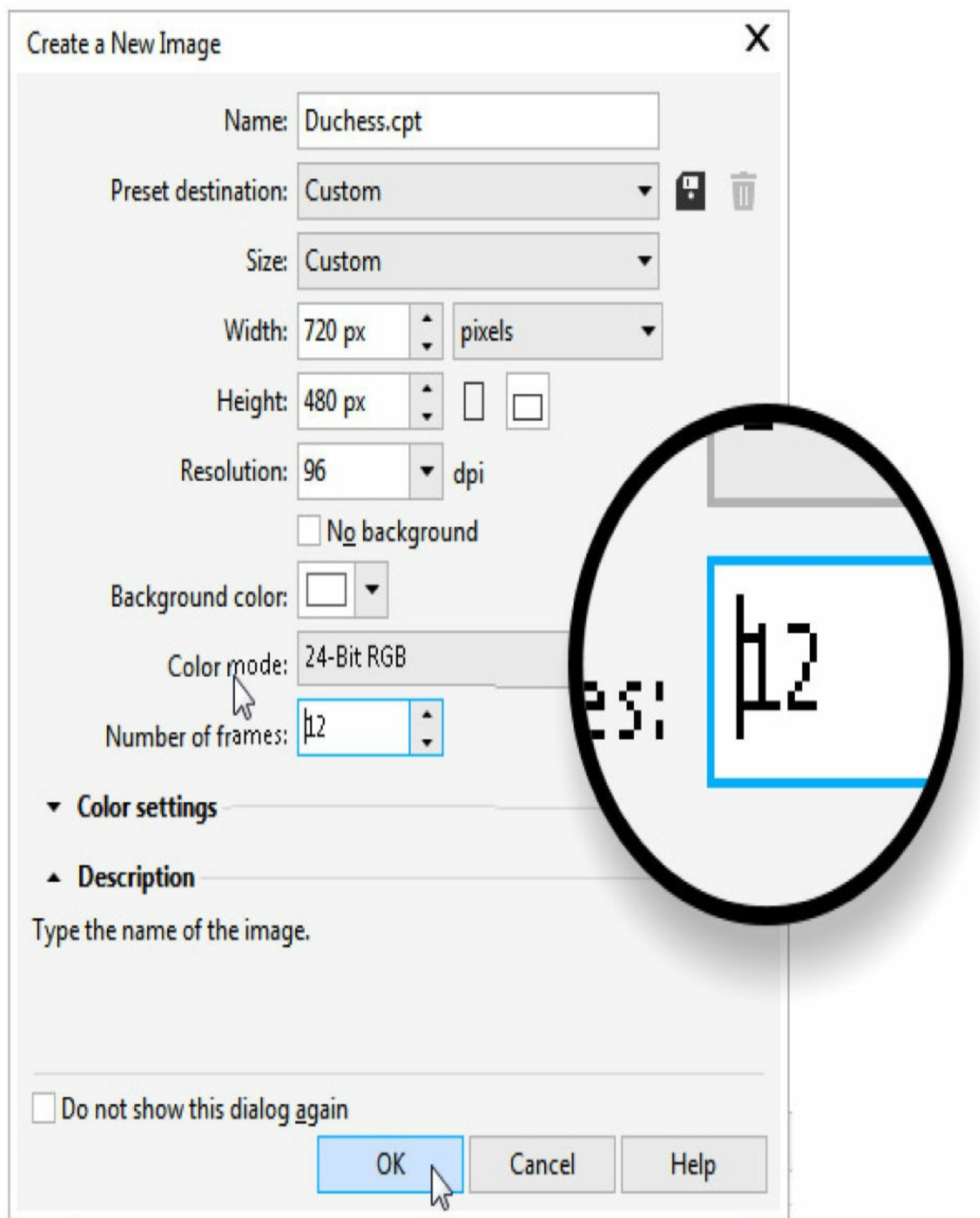
An Anticlimax with Fantastic Results

You already know how to place an image on a background of a multiframe document, and how to export this document to GIF. So this section is a small review of the steps you'll have permanently committed to memory after working through them using the video of my cat.

Creating the Video Animation Sequence

1. In PHOTO-PAINT, choose File | New. You already know (because I told you) that the image dimensions are 720 pixels wide by 480 high, so enter these settings in the Create a New Image dialog and then enter **12** for the number of frames. Unlike the airplane image earlier, these frames aren't static, so they can't be copied and pasted onto new backgrounds. Click OK to display the empty document window, and make

sure both the Object Manager and Movie docker are onscreen. See the following illustration.

Create a New Image ✕

Name: Duchess.cpt

Preset destination: Custom ▼

Size: Custom ▼

Width: 720 px ▲▼ pixels ▼

Height: 480 px ▲▼ ▯ ▭

Resolution: 96 ▼ dpi

☐ No background

Background color: ▯ ▼

Color mode: 24-Bit RGB

Number of frames: 12 ▲▼

▼ Color settings

▲ Description

Type the name of the image.

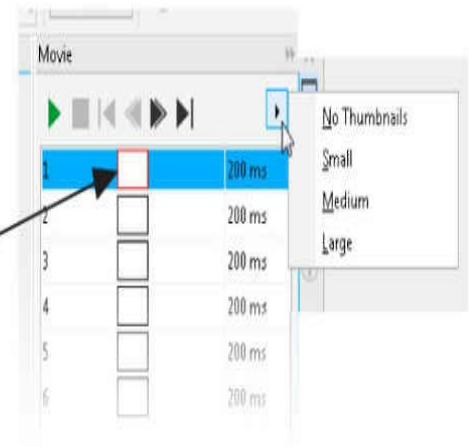☐ Do not show this dialog again

OK   Cancel   Help

2. Double-click the first frame thumbnail on the Movie docker to make sure the first image you place is in the first frame. It's marked with an "a" in .

Object   Tools   Window   Help

77%

Import (Ctrl+I)
Import a file into the active image.

720 px
480 px

Window | Dockers | Movie

Movie

No Thumbnails
Small
Medium
Large

200 ms
200 ms
200 ms
200 ms
200 ms
200 ms

Double-click the first frame to move to it.

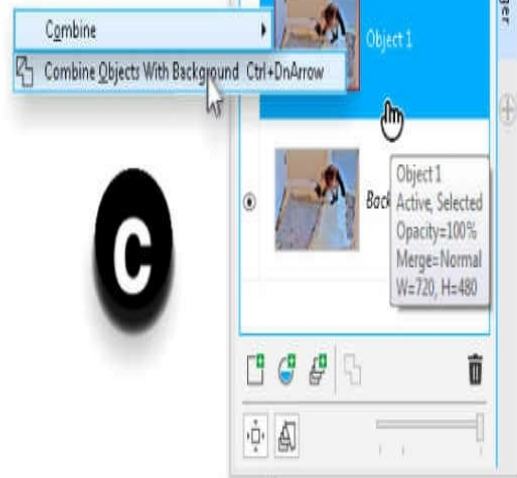**a**

Cursor is loaded with the image.

Click anywhere toward the center of the background. Do *not* move cursor while clicking.

b

Object Manager

Normal   100   %

Combine
Combine Objects With Background   Ctrl+DnArrow

Object 1

Object 1
Active, Selected
Opacity=100%
Merge=Normal
W=720, H=480

Back

c

FIGURE 22-4   **Add the frames you saved as new objects in PHOTO-PAINT.**

Tip You can drag frames up and down on the Movie docker to relocate them in time—
which sounds like a new show on the Syfy network, doesn't it?

3. Click the Import button, which is about in the middle of the Standard Bar. Go find the
first still image in your sequence. For me, it's Duchess0000.bmp. Click File | Import,
and your cursor is now loaded with a 720×480 image ready to be placed in a 720×480
frame. Although you can click almost anywhere in the frame to place the image, be sure
to make it a definitive (not moving) click. PHOTO-PAINT gets impatient when you
hesitate, and a misplaced frame is the result. See callout "b" in Figure 22-4.

Tip If you think you have an excellent mastery of your mouse or stylus, you can select
more than one image file when you choose to import an image. The cursor then
becomes loaded with successive images that you click one at a time into frames after
you flatten the current image and then move on to highlight the next frame on the
Video docker.

4. On the Object Manager, right-click and then choose Combine | Combine Objects With
Background. Frame 1 is now finished.
5. Repeat Steps 2–4 for the rest of the images you captured, making certain they are in
sequence and you don't accidentally place duplicates in new Movie docker slots.
6. Once you have the stills tagged in the Video docker, play the sequence, and you might
notice that two frames need time adjusting.

Timing Is Everything

You'll notice that because the video sequence doesn't loop perfectly, Duchess begins at the
right of the rug, and the video ends with her in the middle of the rug, more toward my
camera. You cannot (do not want to) sweat for hours trying to find stills or use the Liquefy
brush to get her to match the first and last frames. And ping-ponging the stills will result in
a 23-frame file that looks like a 1980s cat food commercial, and really pushes it in terms of
what is an acceptable file size for GIFs—with broadband these days, a 1MB to 2MB GIF

is not a problem.

Let's rethink the ending, then. Why not just put a short hold on the last frame, so the audience can gander a little at a still image of a cat that is under a rug half the time? A "hold" of say 800 ms is a good amount of time in this example to stay on frame 12 before looping back to frame 1. A fade to black would work, too, telling the audience (instead of strongly hinting) that the video is over. But let's stick with the hold and see how you feel about it.

Hold On to That Cat!

Tutorial

1. Click the frame 12 entry box that reads 200 ms at the moment.
2. Type **800** in it, as shown in the next illustration.
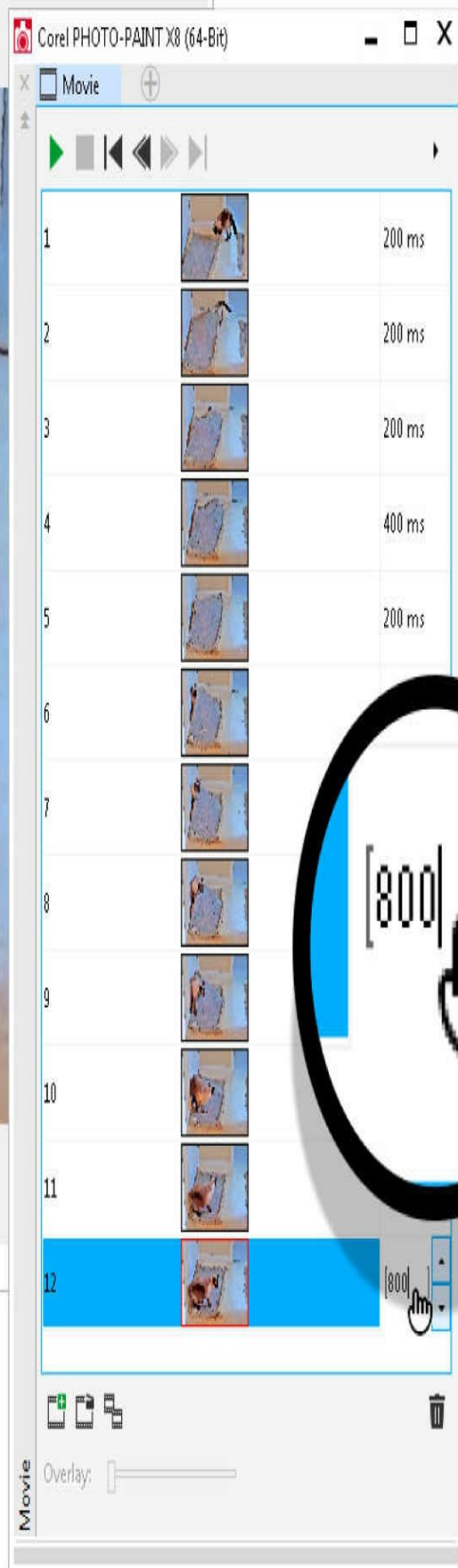
3. One more edit in timing would make the video a little more interesting. Duchess doesn't spend very much time under the rug—she believes that all games are time trials—and it would be neat if she stayed "undercover" for just a little longer. Therefore, go to frame 3 or 4, or wherever your frames show a lumpy carpet, and change the length of the frame to 400 ms. See the next illustration. Through trial and error—mostly error—I came up with times for this video (and no two videos are alike) of 800 ms to create a pause and 400 ms to create a brief delay. Play with the timing on this stuff. A lot of GIF animators don't have the features that PHOTO-PAINT does.

4. It's on to the export part of the tutorial. Really, the only difference between exporting the airplane example and this one is, I think, an optimized palette, and it needs lot less dithering intensity (try 22%). This image, by the nature of its content, doesn't need a lot of "faking" different colors via dithering.

5. Do it! Export the file, play it in an internet browser, and then invite some friends over and tell them, "See? I *told* you the internet is made of cats!"

You owe yourself a big pat on the back (don't try this by yourself) for getting through this chapter. Imagine: you now not only have quite a few advanced image retouching tricks tucked under your belt, but you know how to make a visually rich GIF animation with a moving object that loops continuously. This is a *lot* better than learning how to make a GIF animation that blinks static text such as "My First Website 101" on and off.

Now that you know how to make, save, and change movie frames, you have weeks if not years of experimenting to be done with new ideas and different animation objects of your own. And you *can* save an animation to AVI in addition to the GIF file format—you can choose these from the Save As type drop-down list when you select File | Save and Save As. This means that creating titles and (minor) special effects for larger projects is a possibility.

You've probably noticed that the left side of the book you're holding is a tad heavier than the right side at this moment. Or if you're reading the e-book version of this *Official Guide*, you might notice that the left side of your reading device is heavier. Perhaps not.

In either event, this means you're almost at the end of the book. But not *exactly* the end, because I have some closing thoughts and suggestions on where to go from here. The next chapter is a short one, but it's long on advice that can be best given by the fellow who wrote all those pages beneath your left thumb.

23   Final Thoughts: Where Do We Go from Here?

Everyone is new to CorelDRAW, regardless of the version. It's an adventure for the pro and the beginner alike, and hopefully I didn't leave out anything in the steps, the notes, the text, or the discovery process. As you close this book and hunker down into another personal episode with CorelDRAW, it's crucial to your growth as a designer to keep your senses keen and your eyes open. See what you see, and not what you *think* you see; we're easily misled by preconceived notions about what the world that surrounds us truly looks like, as odd as that sounds. I credit this nugget of wisdom to Betty Edwards, author of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*.

I left such specific, sometimes profound revelations for the end of the book, because this is, after all, *CorelDRAW X8: The Official Guide*. Indulge me with this chapter, and in return I'll gift you with some "good stuff" you'll need to keep in mind (and question) long after you've put this book back on your shelf—or turned your iPad off.

No Skipping: You'll Lose Points!

While learning how to set up CorelDRAW so it operates to your best advantage, do *not* take the attitude of, "Yeah, yeah, I know about the Pen tool, so I'll skip this section." First of all, there are *eight* tools for drawing in CorelDRAW, and each was designed for a specific purpose. I bought a book on vector graphics once in 1991, and I closed the cover far too soon out of a giddy feeling of self-confidence that I knew everything about Pen tools. I then fired up my screaming 386, loaded CorelDRAW version minus 3 or something…and was completely lost. I expect your experience might be a little like mine. For example, Chapter 7 is a pretty authoritative one on how paths are created with the drawing tools, and you'll be missing out on valuable information if you gloss over it. I went into writing this book not presuming anything, and as a reader, you shouldn't either.

Let's make learning CorelDRAW X8 an excursion, an *adventure*. Feel free to open this book at any point, but like with any adventure, you must travel with provisions, such intangibles as a positive attitude, a concept, a proficiency with your computer, and an eagerness to learn. And last but not least, you should have a desired direction, so you don't