Swim Ladder and Hand Holds

When the C350 Mark II came out my wife and I crawled all over the boat at the Annapolis Sailboat Show that October. Many, not all, of the changes I saw as improvements on what still attracts me to the 350. I have found the swim ladder on my "Mark I" to be clumsy and difficult to manage. I keep a dinghy on davits and to access the swim platform…to get out of the cockpit….I have to launch the dinghy to lower the swim ladder. There must be a way to mount a telescoping ladder like I saw on the Mark II. On the Catalina350.net website, in one of their forums, I found such a ladder mounted on a boat from Wisconsin picture included here. Great, I purchased a telescoping ladder (with a lower platform….so we can stand while helping one of the many grandchildren up) and mounted it on the "sugar scoop" of *Makani Kai* (see picture #2). I have the "Starboard" needed to make the cover like "my brother" in Wisconsin and will complete that portion of the project this Summer. Problem: The ladder (when folded) projects out from the transom….this is necessary so that when deployed and resting on bumpers mounted on the transom the ladder is vertical……but the projecting ladder now interferes with raising the dinghy. Solution: I obtained a discarded bimini bow from my marina (1" stainless steel) and cut arches form the corners that allowed using "off the rack" 30 and 60 degree rail bases. When mounted, these "arches" provide a surface for the dinghy to ride over the projecting ladder. Not only do the "arches" make raising/lowering the dinghy much easier but suddenly I had hand holds near the water.This is when I realized it is (almost) impossible to get up onto the swim platform (when the ladder is not deployed) without the addition of some kind of handles. So I lowered my ladder, climbed up and then found myself automatically reaching for another handhold just to each side of the walkthrough to the cockpit. Well, off to the local marine store (no, not the big national one but our local got-everything-you-could-imagine one) to buy two 12" mounting-bolts-built-in handholds that I installed where I found myself naturally reaching. (see picture 3) Now I can access the swim platform without having to lower the dinghy….I can loosen it and push aside to squeeze through. Now I also have a series of handholds that allow secure movement from water, over the swim platform and into the cockpit……definitely killing a several birds with only a few stones.

Bill Templeton C350 #333 *Makani Kai*


Ocean Gate, NJ


WAUKESHA, WI


Ocean Gate, NJ