

tension. And you know what? With my axon here [he holds up his axon "tail" that has a menacing light and a barb ] I send messages to muscles. Like this! [He lunges forwards with tail light flashing and his clicker sounding. He appears to jab his axon into Mr. Muscle who leaps in the air]. Who says we don't make you move? Hold still! When my messages arrive on your muscles they flood them with a special salt called calcium. This makes the muscle fingers slide together and the muscle tenses up. When the messages stop, the calcium stops flooding, and the muscle relaxes. Hold still and take your calcium. Hold still!" [He repeatedly jabs Mr. Muscle, who jumps and tries to get away from him. They move around their spotlight area until they finally move out of it. This leaves only Ms. Gamma on the area who says softly:]

"What a noisy pair. I follow Mr. Alpha around doing my job. Messages about length and changes in length go from spindles inside muscles. These spindles are held by special ribbons lying alongside the muscle fiber. When muscle fibers shorten, these special ribbons would relax except that I keep them tense. How do I know to keep them tense? Well, special messages go from the spindles to Sarah Bellum, the special place for keeping-your-balance. She sends them back down to me and my messages go to the spindle to keep its ribbons tensed up. Actually, [she leans forward, puts her hand to her mouth, looks to one side and says confidentially] I receive my messages just before Alpha neuron receives hers. Sarah Bellum sends them to me because she says that Alpha neuron is so active she would mess up the spindle. So I send my messages out to the spindle fibers to make them tense up before Alpha neuron can send her messages to the main muscle. So there! By the way, I have a little brother called Beta who does much the same thing as I do. But he is too shy to come tonight."

- A loud noise is heard in the last area on the near right. The sound of clickers going off gets louder and louder. The Gamma neuron is startled and says:

"Oh, did they frighten you nice people [she asks of the audience]? Don't worry. I know who they are. They are the neurons that help send messages from the muscles up to the brain. They tell the brain that movements are happening. They are just having a bit of fun right now."

- The spotlight on Gamma neuron fades out as the violet spot comes on the area in the near right with two neurons dressed in the usual way. They say in unison:

"Hi! We're the neurons that help send messages from the muscles and skin up to the brain. That way you know if you have moved or if you have felt sensations on your skin. Our messages go from the muscles to us in the spinal cord and then on up to the brain."