WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

placing a barrier substance in the wellbore while a first fluid is present in the wellbore; and

flowing a second fluid into the wellbore while the first fluid and the barrier substance are in the wellbore,

wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the barrier substance transmits pressure between the first and second fluids after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance prevents upward migration of gas in the wellbore.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein placing the barrier substance in the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein flowing the second fluid into the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

10. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

placing a barrier substance in the wellbore while a first fluid is present in the wellbore; and

flowing a second fluid into the wellbore while the first fluid and the barrier substance are in the wellbore, the first and second fluids having different densities, and

wherein the second fluid density is greater than the first fluid density.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein pressure in the first fluid remains substantially constant while the greater density second fluid is flowed into the wellbore.

12. A well system, comprising:

first and second fluids in a wellbore; and

a barrier substance separating the first and second fluids, wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the barrier substance transmits pressure between the first and second fluids after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the barrier substance prevents upward migration of gas in the wellbore.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid.

16. The system of claim 12, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

17. The system of claim 12, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore.

18. The system of claim 12, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

19. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

circulating a first fluid through a tubular string and an annulus formed between the tubular string and the wellbore;

then partially withdrawing the tubular string from the wellbore;

then placing a barrier substance in the wellbore;

then further partially withdrawing the tubular string from the wellbore; and

then flowing a second fluid into the wellbore.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein a density of the second fluid is greater than a density of the first fluid.

22. The method of claim 19, wherein pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant during placing the barrier substance in the wellbore.

23. The method of claim 19, wherein pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant during flowing the second fluid into the wellbore.

24. The method of claim 19, further comprising, prior to placing the barrier substance in the wellbore, adjusting a pressure in the first fluid exposed to a formation intersected by the wellbore, whereby the pressure in the first fluid at a selected location is approximately the same as a pore pressure of the formation at the selected location.

25. The method of claim 19, further comprising, prior to placing the barrier substance in the wellbore, adjusting a pressure in the first fluid exposed to a formation intersected by the wellbore, whereby the pressure in the first fluid at a selected location is marginally greater than a pore pressure of the formation at the selected location.

26. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid.

27. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance prevents upward migration of gas in the wellbore.

28. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid.

29. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

30. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore.

31. The method of claim 19, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

32. The method of claim 19, wherein placing the barrier substance in the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

33. The method of claim 19, wherein flowing the second fluid into the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

placing a barrier substance in the wellbore while a first fluid is present in the wellbore; and

flowing a second fluid into the wellbore while the first fluid and the barrier substance are in the wellbore , characterized in that the second fluid fills the wellbore from the barrier substance to the surface,

wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the barrier substance transmits pressure between the first and second fluids after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance prevents upwad migration of gas in the wellbore.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid .

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore .

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein placing the barrier substance in the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein flowing the second fluid into the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

9. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

placing a barrier substance in the wellbore while a first fluid is present in the wellbore; and

flowing a second fluid into the wellbore while the first fluid and the barrier substance are in the wellbore, the first and second fluids having different densities, characterized in that the second fluid fills the wellbore from the barrier substance to the surface, and

wherein the second fluid density is greater than the first fluid density.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein pressure in the first fluid remains substantially constant while the greater density second fluid is flowed into the wellbore.

11. A well system, comprising:

first and second fluids in a wellbore; and

a barrier substance separating the first and second fluids, characterised in that the second fluid fills the wellbore from the barrier substance to the surface, wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the barrier substance transmits pressure between the first and second fluids after the barrier substance sets in the wellbore, and

wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the barrier substance prevents upward migration of gas in the wellbore.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

15. The system of claim 11, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

17. A method of controlling pressure in a wellbore, the method comprising:

circulating a first fluid through a tubular string and an annulus formed between the tubular string and the wellbore;

then partially withdrawing the tubular string from the wellbore;

then placing a barrier substance in the wellbore;

then further partially withdrawing the tubular string from the wellbore; and

then flowing a second fluid into the wellbore.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the first and second fluids have different densities.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein a density of the second fluid is greater than a density of the first fluid.

20. The method of claim 17, pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant during placing the barrier substance in the wellbore.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant during flowing the second fluid into the wellbore.

22. The method of claim 17, further comprising, prior to placing the barrier substance in the wellbore, adjusting a pressure in the first fluid exposed to a formation intersected by the wellbore, whereby the pressure in the first fluid at a selected location is approximately the same as a pore pressure of the formation at the selected location.

23. The method of claim 17, further comprising, prior to placing the barrier substance in the wellbore, adjusting a pressure in the first fluid exposed to a formation intersected by the wellbore, whereby the pressure in the first fluid at a selected location is marginally greater than a pore pressure of the formation at the selected location.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance isolates the first fluid from the second fluid.

25. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance prevents upward migration of gas in the wellbore.

26. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance prevents migration of gas from the first fluid to the second fluid.

27. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance comprises a thixotropic gel.

28. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance comprises a gel which sets in the wellbore.

29. The method of claim 17, wherein the barrier substance has a viscosity greater than viscosities of the first and second fluids.

30 The method of claim 17, wherein placing the barrier substance in the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.

31. The method of claim 17, wherein flowing the second fluid into the wellbore further comprises automatically controlling a fluid return choke, whereby pressure in the first fluid is maintained substantially constant.